THE TRUTH ABOUT ULSTER

F. FRANKFORT MOORE

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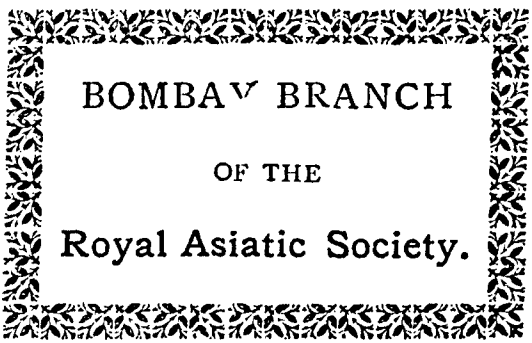

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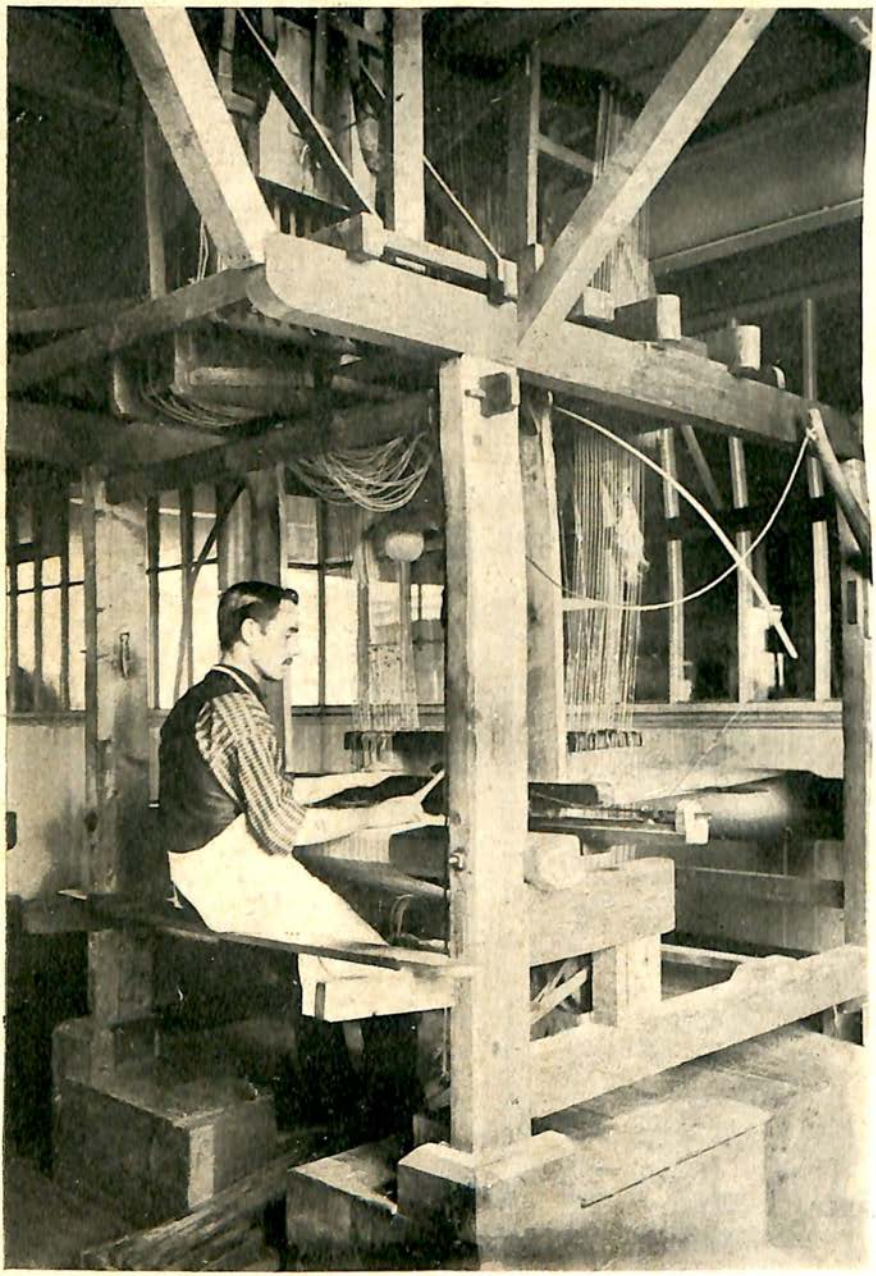

HAND-LOOM WEAVING.

[*Frontispiece.*

THE TRUTH ABOUT ULSTER

BY

F. FRANKFORT MOORE

Author of "The Ulsterman," "The Life of Oliver Goldsmith," &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS
BY
ROBERT WELCH, M.R.I.A.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

FIGHTING ULSTER 9

CHAPTER II

SOME ULSTER FIGHTS 26

CHAPTER III

MOB RULE IN BELFAST 37

CHAPTER IV

THE TRUE ULSTERMAN 70

CHAPTER V

A PRACTICAL COMMUNITY 87

CHAPTER VI

THE ULSTERMAN ON HIS GUARD 99

CHAPTER VII

THE CAUTIOUS HOSPITALITIES OF ULSTER 114

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

NOT A GIDDY PROVINCE 132

CHAPTER IX

PARENTS AND CHILDREN 156

CHAPTER X

RELIGION AND HYSTERIA 174

CHAPTER XI

PREACHERS I HAVE KNOWN 198

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS 213

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORANGEMEN 235

CHAPTER XIV

IRELAND AND ULSTER 251

CHAPTER XV

THE MANCHESTER OF ULSTER 270

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Hand-loom Weaving	*Frontispiece*	
Orange Procession Mustering	*To face p.*	18
Royal Avenue, Belfast	„	32
Glenariff, Co. Antrim	„	70
Armagh Protestant Cathedral	„	86
Co. Down Cottage	„	116
Belfast Castle, Cave Hill, and Lough	„	136
Derry Walls	„	150
Dinner-hour, Harland and Wolff's	„	158
Bleach Green, Glenmore	„	170
Waringstown	„	184
Belfast Rope Works	„	192
The White Rocks, Portrush	„	252
Herring Fishery, Ardglass	„	264
Town Hall, Belfast	„	270
A Linen Street, Belfast	„	278

THE TRUTH ABOUT ULSTER

CHAPTER I

FIGHTING ULSTER

As I sit down to write there lies on the chair beside me a newspaper of the morning, and one of the columns is headed by the query:

"WILL ULSTER FIGHT?"

and that was just what people were asking of one another at the date of my earliest recollections of Ulster nearly fifty years ago. I witnessed, under the protection of a portly nurse, the outbreak of what I distinctly hoped (after I had been convoyed to the nursery) would be a campaign of many years, with daily parades of

> "The Futt and the Dhragoons
> In squadrons and platoons
> With their music playin' chunes,"

just as had taken place less than fifteen years

earlier "by Shannon shore," according to the historian of that brief campaign. But the hopes of the nursery were not altogether realised. A week or two brought those early Belfast riots to a close; but during the next twenty-five years I was a witness of many other encounters on the same battle-ground, so that when I saw the heading just now,

"WILL ULSTER FIGHT?"

I felt inclined to ask myself when had Ulster not been fighting? She has been fighting for precisely the same "Cause" at intervals during the past fifty years, and for nearly three hundred years previously she had been fighting with an enemy who was the same, although wearing a different uniform. So that I fancy the question of the hour should be, "Will Ulster continue to fight?" rather than "Will Ulster Fight?" Perhaps someone will be able to point out what changes that make for a cessation of the hostilities of three hundred years have taken place in the spirit of Ulster during the past three or four years, so that we can sleep peacefully in our beds on this side of the Channel in the assurance that Ulster—with all who have most to lose by a fight on the side of fighting—will refrain; whereas in other days the same people were ever seeking peace, but quite powerless to ensue it.

The Belfast riots have occupied a place as a modern journalistic headline with as great fidelity of recurrence as Halley's comet or an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. There have really been few riots that could be called periodic. The Chartist demonstrations were like fireworks that have felt the damp of an inclement summer, and the frame-breakers, though nasty, were never to be depended on. A few thousand people pulled down the railings at Hyde Park more than forty years ago, and were never heard of again; and equally intermittent were the people who, with Mr. John Burns, fought for an hour or two with the Guards in Trafalgar Square twenty years later—only Mr. John Burns has been heard of a good deal since; but the Belfast Riots as a headline might have been "kept standing." During the past half-century every period of quietude has been followed by one of activity among the riotous elements of Ulster; and the scientific explanation of the recurrence compared with the dispersion of the others to which I have referred, is simple enough: in Ulster the volcanic conditions have been intensified rather than reduced; but elsewhere the reasons for the outbreaks have been removed; and rioters usually have listened to reason a day or so too late.

Ulster was originally a region of riotous activity,

if we are to believe all the accounts of the province which have been put into our hands by the recorders of the traditional fighting of the chiefs; and the attempts that were made to reduce the annual carnage were on a scientific level with those of the men who tried to put out a fire by deluging it with cans of oil. In a more detailed chapter of history I may be able to refer to the varieties of this transaction; but it is enough for my purpose to say here that the efforts at colonisation made by the early, if not the earliest, masters of the art of pacification in Ulster were too faithfully framed on the lines of the Act of Settlement formulated by Moses in respect of Palestine, to have any greater chance of success in Ulster than it had in Asia Minor.

And be it remembered also that the failure in both cases was due to the same cause, namely, the incompleteness of the conquests which were to result in perpetual peace. The scheme of colonisation recommended to the Israelitish brotherhood was a simple one, and I should not like to be the one to stand up and say in the presence of a congregation of Ulster Presbyterians that it did not come direct from God. It was neither more nor less than a policy of extermination. The instructions for carrying it out may be read in

detail in a certain chapter of Exodus. The original inhabitants of the land were to be wiped out, men, women, and children, especially the children unborn. Truly an effective, if somewhat drastic, scheme of "planting" a colony. But in framing it, unfortunately, neither the humanity of man nor the cupidity of the children of Israel was taken into account, and the result was what God's mouthpiece prophesied it would be: the colonists were commanded to spare no one, and assured that if they did, they would find that the survivors of the massacre would become as thorns in their sides for evermore. But the colonists were weak enough to do some sparing, and of course the prophecy as to the result was realised; for those of the Philistines who were allowed to live became as thorns in their sides, even those whom the cupidity of the Israelites had saved in order that they might be turned into slaves.

Exactly the same thing has happened in Ulster. The colonists of the Plantation instituted by James I. wanted their wood to be hewn for them and their water to be drawn for them; therefore they spared a reasonable number of the original Irish who were quarrelling among themselves, and so (according to the statesmanship of the Middle Ages and of a long time afterwards) should have

been swept out of existence altogether; and these survivors became as thorns in their flesh, especially when they were hewing wood or drawing water; and so they have remained to the present day. Ulster is still a colony in the midst of the hostile people who, though they have never (generally speaking) recovered more of their old position than allows of their quarrelling among themselves, are still, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, always ready to fling a faggot at the head of their task-master.

That is, in very truth, what the constant fighting in Ulster has meant. It has been the attempt of the subject race to rebel against the ascendancy. In all the other provinces of Ireland some progress has been made by the conquered race during the past hundred years or so toward regaining the ascendancy which they once enjoyed; and the dominant ones have for long thought it prudent to suspend their domineering; but in Ulster there has never been a need for them to do so. They have always looked with indignant eyes at the attempts of the Hivites and the Hittites and the Jebusites to regain their original position, and called such attempts by the name of rebellion. They have been fighting since the days of the siege of Derry against the intermittent re-

bellions of the native Irish, who had become their servants; and now when it is suggested to them that these servants should become their masters, some newspaper folk inquire with a seriousness that has its comic side to anyone who knows Ulster and the history of Ulster, "Will Ulster fight?"

I repeat that the first incident of my life of which I retain a vivid memory was of Ulster fighting, and the *casus belli* of more than fifty years ago has not been removed; on the contrary, it has been intensified during the latter half of this space of time, until Ulster to-day resembles one of those volcanic basins which only need a single stone to be flung into them to produce such an eruption as may change the whole face of the landscape.

Of course, there was no talk that I can recollect in the nursery of the possibility of a riot. I was not old enough to know what the word meant even if I had heard it spoken. But after our usual Sunday midday dinner we were taken for a walk among those streets of Belfast which were in close proximity to the quay-side—our nurse was a Presbyterian, and had connections in the mercantile marine of these localities. It must have been in the house of one of her relatives that some loud conversation was going on when we were brought in from the street. The

names of some clergymen were, I remember, tossed about on the tumultuous waves of converse—"Dr. Cooke," "Dr. Drew," and, I think, "Dr. Gregg"—these were the names that I heard in connection with an important and much-used phrase "cloddin' stones." I was old enough to know what "cloddin' stones" meant, but not old enough to be aware of the close connection there has ever been since the days of the martyr Stephen between theology and geology. But there had been "cloddin'"; I heard that the "Papishes" had made a vow, the terms of which should never have reached the ears of a child, that they would treat certain divines as Stephen had been treated, only they did not mention the martyr's name, nor did they hint that it was to heaven they meant to "clod" the clergymen. (I was at that time fully informed as to the direction in which Stephen had been sent, as I am sure every other Protestant child in the Province was also.)

But before our nurse's whispered protest—with a wink in our direction—against the bad word that had been spoken in quoting verbatim the terms of the awful vow that had been made, there was the sound of shouting in the street—shouting and cheers and the rush of many feet. Upstairs the children were sent amid the shrieks of our faithful nurse; but

there were windows in the bedroom where we took refuge, and from one of them I saw a flying crowd of men and women, boys and girls of the mill-working order, and behind them were riding at the trot three dragoons with their sabres drawn and at the "carry."

I had never before seen a mounted soldier with a brass helmet and a real sword, and I recollect distinctly how I was thrilled by the sight. I had seen many pictures in bound copies of the *Illustrated London News* dealing with the recent war in the Crimea, and I had been to a panorama of the still more recent Indian Mutiny, so that my knowledge of warfare was more than superficial, and there before my eyes was warfare itself going on—warfare at the trot, to be sure, with nothing of "the wild charge they made" in the illustration to Balaclava, but still warfare beyond pictures and panoramas, and the result was rather too much for me. I went down before the excitement of the moment; but so far as I could gather, when the nurse had shaken me together and silenced my yells, I was the only one who had been ridden down by the three dragoons. The crowds outside had rushed into a narrow side-street, and the three dragoons had continued trotting down the broader thoroughfare. They had disappeared before my

eyes were dry, and I thought that the battle was over.

But before many minutes had passed there came shouts, as if the whole town of Belfast were being crushed into the mouth of the street. Beneath our eyes there surged such a crowd as I had never seen before, formed of the "all sorts" that constitute a town crowd, and a town crowd is a town riot in the making; and with a clatter of hoofs on the large, kidney-shaped boulders that formed the ideal paving in that neighbourhood in that day, there came, also at the "trot" with sabres at the "carry," what seemed to me to be a whole army of cavalry—thousands more than the artist had been able to put into the picture of Balaclava, and he had done his best to suggest that there was a considerable crush there—down they trotted for nearly half-an-hour, five thousand men might have been in that street; and that was the rough estimate of the number of the soldiers made by our nurse, and I believed her until I was puzzled by recognising the faces of several of the men as those whom I had noticed riding past the window a few minutes earlier. Then it was I made my first acquaintance with the stage trick of causing a very small army do duty for a very large one. The dragoons had simply trotted down the street, wheeled by their left into another that was

ORANGE PROCESSION MUSTERING

parallel with the first, and so round to our window once more.

I am sure that they tired of this roundabout riding, making a demonstration, but doing nothing. I recollect that I asked our nurse why the soldiers did not fight. I do not remember that she gave me any explanation of their lapse; but I know that it was no more satisfactory to me than was the explanation of the trombone player in the orchestra of a theatre when the manager noticed him idling through eight or ten bars at a time, and demanded to know if the man expected to be paid for doing nothing. But after half-an-hour's trotting round, the dragoons were ordered to march; and now we all had more leisure to observe one another, and I saw that several of the men got on excellent terms with our nurse and her relations (female) who stood admiringly at the windows. We small fry had our faces glued to the lower panes.

Then all at once shouts were heard coming from the broad thoroughfare at the head of our street, and the dragoons ceased their game of marching and counter-marching. The street was clear of people, but it was plain that something exciting was going on on a more heroic scale a few hundred yards away. But we were old campaigners by now, and ridiculed the cautionary phrases of our nurse when

someone suggested that we should be safer at home. We boldly walked forth, and up the street, and there I saw a white-haired, elderly gentleman on horseback, with dragoons on each side of him and a whole line of soldiers with rifles and bayonets fixed, standing at "attention," while the old gentleman removed his hat as if he recognised a lady at a distance, and then began to read, very badly indeed, something from a paper which he tried to hold in a suitable position before his eyes, but which the nervousness of his horse rendered almost impossible. After a very poor display of elocution, and a deplorable one of horsemanship, we heard the words, "God save the Queen," followed by a hoarse "Present arms!" from a mounted officer wearing a shako with a little white ball poised at the top in front; while he gave his sword a twist and brought the hilt up to his face, and then lowered the point of the blade. There was a clash of rifles all down the long line of red-coated infantry, and before another word of command had been given, a policeman, who looked a very worm by the side of the glorious military, though he did wear a tall, glazed hat and a black coat with a leather belt, and though he carried a serviceable grazier's walking stick, spoke some uncivil words to our nurse, commanding her to "take them childer out o' this or it'll not be tellin'

ye. Don't ye see that he's read the Riot Act. Heth! you're a gierl bringin' them wee 'uns intill a crowd like thon!"

This was distinctly personal; and somehow we felt more dismayed by the broad Belfast staccato of a member of the most inefficient police force that ever existed since the days of Dogberry and Verges, than we were by the show of force in scarlet and gold; and there was nothing more for us in the way of riots that day. We had not far to go to reach our home, and we were greeted by father and mother with that show of emotion which is reserved for the fourth act of the opera when the hero returns from the wars.

But when we had been enfolded in loving arms, and that scene was over, the nurse received her scolding, and dissolved in tears.

At tea that evening I heard the situation of affairs in the town discussed between the grown-ups. It seemed that some of the more bellicose of the clergy, Episcopalian as well as Presbyterian, had taken to preaching *en plein air*, some highly-seasoned Protestant doctrines, condemning in the emphatic way of those days the "errors" of the Church of Rome. The *locale* of their mission was one that afforded many opportunities to passing members of the erroneous creed to hear some home-truths, and they

had the bad taste to respond with stones and other missiles, which are really, in their own way, quite as irritating as any theological arguments. The supporters of the preachers found them so, and the old Ulster conflict—the old world conflict—was renewed. The most sensible nations have fought for years over a woman, others have fought over the possession of a worthless piece of land—over the honour of a contemptible ruffian, but we know that the most "plaguy knocks" have been given by those who endeavour to "prove their doctrines orthodox" by such means.

There was, and I believe there still is, a part of Belfast singularly well adapted for the dissemination of doctrines, and at one time there was to be found plentifully in the same locality the means for repudiating the acceptance of any doctrine that might be formulated by a preacher. The place was known as the Custom House Steps. The Custom House buildings form quite an imposing pile and, through standing on what was originally a marsh, the chief offices are approached by a series of stone terraces with many fine flights of steps. No matter on what terrace an orator may stand, he occupies a commanding position relative to his audience. Given conditions so favourable for the exercise of oratory, a city of the dumb would become a seat of eloquence.

If Reformers' Tree had a tenth of the advantages possessed by the Custom House Steps in Belfast, it would become the centre from which even greater nonsense would radiate than may be heard on a fine Sunday by the loiterers in Hyde Park. "The Steps" in Belfast have done more to encourage polemical discussion in the town during the half century of their existence than all the preachers that were ever ordained in the Province, and some of them have been very encouraging indeed to disputation. For many years, anyone who had a theory of life, or a new religion, or a longing for a fight—a trait by no means unknown to the most earnest neophytes—could depend upon getting an audience on a Sunday afternoon on "The Steps." The breastwork of the quay is only about a hundred yards away, and yet I never heard of more than an occasional orator having to be fished out of the water after even the most challenging delivery of the most insulting doctrine.

The reason of this was not far to seek. The three-sided square—a favourite street configuration in Belfast—in the middle of which the Custom House stands, was loosely paved with the kidney-shaped cobbles to be found in millions all along the coasts of Antrim and Down, and it was quickly found by the intelligent seekers after truth who

sought for it in this locality on Sundays, that, as a medium for replying to such points in the preacher's discourse as were not altogether acceptable to their ears, these cobble pavements could scarcely be surpassed. Thus it was that, after a warm interchange of opinion on a basis of basalt on a Sunday afternoon between opposing factions, the whole neighbourhood had a very untidy appearance, and the strain upon the resources of the surgical staff of the hospital almost reached breaking point.

After the first riot which I saw in this quarter, I know that the street around suggested that a few hundred men had been engaged for some time in looking for a sewer and had forgotten to replace the roadway. For High Street, Victoria Street, and Corporation Street which meet about here, were only macadamised roads, having a surface of broken granite or basalt, far more easily disintegrated even than the cobbled quays, so that a mob might argue with their opponents or with the police without putting themselves to any trouble beyond that involved in kicking up a few dozen stones of the handiest possible size, and possessing as many natural facets as the Koh-i-noor does artificial ones.

It was considered (in some directions) a happy inspiration on the part of the Corporation to substitute a more prehensile system of paving in all

the argumentative localities of the town, and "square setts" were laid down of the same type as those the Dublin Corporation bought from the patriot Parnell, though the tender of his agent was several thousand pounds in advance of the next lowest; and it was fondly hoped that peace would "sett in" from this period. These hopes were not fully realised; but there was certainly a marked difference in the range at which the discussions began; and in times of stress there were, I was told, hardly enough riveters' "nuts" left in the shipbuilding yards to carry out the contracts in hand. The iron "nut" as an agent of argument may not be so Scriptural as the smooth stone from the brook, or even the rough stone from the prison-yard, but it is far more impressive than either. It is, moreover, easily handled and a little one goes a long way.

CHAPTER II

SOME ULSTER FIGHTS

THE next time that Belfast was the scene of some weeks' fighting was in 1864, and then I was at a boys' school and fully capable, I thought, of appreciating the merits of the quarrel. I have since come to the conclusion that circumstances prevented my taking a perfectly unprejudiced view of the situation, the fact being that there were not half a dozen Roman Catholic boys in the school, and the first thing the Protestant majority, numbering about three hundred, learned, was to shun the others. We looked on them as curiosities, and only spoke to them now and again, as the Burney family spoke to Omai, the young South Sea Islander who had come to England with Captain Cook. We wanted to hear from them what it felt like to be a Catholic, and if they worshipped idols—which they could hardly deny—what particular idol they were worshipping at the moment the inquiry was put; and also was it true

that they had to wash in Holy Water every Sunday, and did it burn like the sulphuric acid in the school laboratory. Also we wanted to know why it was a sin to eat meat on a Friday, and if they had ever been told by anyone competent to pronounce an opinion that they would all go to hell? These innocent inquiries were constantly being put to the Roman Catholic boys during school hours, and I have since thought that we expected too much information from them, and that some of our questions were of too intimate a character to be strictly polite; at any rate, I know that we invariably cut the Catholics when we met in the street; and the general idea that prevailed through the town was that it was a pity that the terms of the foundation of the school were so loosely worded as to admit of Roman Catholics being "on the strength." The founder was, however, a man of a broad mind, and it was his aim in establishing the school to bring about a more friendly feeling between Protestants and Romanists than existed in his day, which was early in the nineteenth century. It is greatly to be feared that his intelligent ambition was not realised. It is said that the pall-bearers at his funeral were three Protestants and three Roman Catholics; but I doubt very much if the *rapprochement* between the two denominations survived the discharge of the melan-

choly duty. Be that as it may, so far from creating a good feeling between the younger generation of Protestants and Romanists, the school seems to me, looking back at the years I spent within its walls, to have contributed largely to the widening of the breach between the two, though I am quite certain that the masters—who, by the way, were all Protestants and Presbyterians—treated the boys with perfect equality.

The riots of this year (1864) were due to the importation the previous year of some hundreds—perhaps thousands—of navvies to dig a new dock, and it was found out that a large proportion of these men were Roman Catholics. The balance of fighting power among the belligerent classes was thereby disturbed; so when the illegal "walking" of the Protestants on the Twelfth of July was interfered with by the opposite party, the result was a series of encounters in many of the streets. It was, however, only when the Romanists tried to organise a party procession of their own a month later that the town was given over to civil war, which police and military found impossible to put down. I believe that it was when I was on my way to school that I saw the cars and waggonettes of the Catholic procession attacked by a body of men who seemed to have been in hiding in what was strategically the

best point of attack on the projected route of the excursionists. This was at the junction of four streets in the very centre of the town. Two of the streets led from the Catholic quarters, and the moment the processional cars emerged from these, they were met with a volley not only of stones, but of bullets as well, and in another moment the central ground had become a battlefield. Of course, the constabulary came up at the double, but they had to be sent for: they were certainly not waiting in anticipation of the meeting of the rival factions.

From that morning for close upon a month the town was in the hands of two mobs. Shops were shut in the principal streets and business was practically suspended in all directions; for the mills and the foundries and the shipbuilding yard of Harland and Wolff—it had only been established a few years, but was turning out some good work—had closed. I remember saying to a boy who walked with me, under the convoy of one of my father's men, that Donegall Place looked as it usually did on Sunday, with all the shops closed, and no traffic to be seen.

Before we got to the end of the street we had to run for our lives. A large and nasty-looking mob came swaggering down the roadway, every man carrying a bludgeon of a very formidable type, if he had been strong enough to use it; but even now I

am still of the opinion that it was quite too unwieldy for close fighting. It was a piece of wood fully four feet long, roughly squared, as if for a gate post, up to within about six inches from one end, where it was whittled away from the four inches of the square to two inches for the grip. A thick band of leather nailed loosely on this end allowed a hand to be thrust through, so giving firmness to the hold. But from the difficulty that some of these desperadoes had in brandishing this club I could see that it would be formidable only for men who were on the ground: a boy would have no difficulty in evading its stroke; but it was as terrifying in appearance as are the horns of Highland cattle to lowland visitors.

This day was, I afterwards learned, one of the most eventful in the whole history of the town. A regular pitched battle took place upon the navvies' own ground. I visited it a few days later as the burghers of Brussels visited Waterloo, and saw how the fighting had been conducted. The dock which was being dug extended over fifteen or twenty acres, and it was already ten feet below the embankment. The Protestant army had got possession of the bank, and drove the navvies into the mud before them with what is, I believe, termed by war correspondents, "a withering fire" of guns and pistols. The navvies, however, seemed not to have been quite

taken by surprise. They were able to respond to the fire, for they had gone to their work of excavation pretty much as the restorers of the walls of Jerusalem had done when working under the eyes of their enemies—with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, only the navvies had guns. For more than an hour the conflict lasted, and undoubtedly blood was shed on both sides, and there was no police interference until the navvies had been driven across the muddy basin which they had been digging.

I do not know how long this battle lasted, but that night when going to bed I stood for some time at an open window and heard the report of shot after shot coming from the north of the town during several minutes, and I learned afterwards that firing had gone on all the night. The newspapers contained a full account of the carnage, and an ample account of the looting that had taken place; and I may here mention incidentally that the destruction of one shop made a surprising difference to the fortunes of the proprietor. There is operative in Ireland a Malicious Injuries Act, which makes the Municipality liable for any destruction done by a mob, or even by a single individual, inspired by malicious motives, and for many years past the town of Belfast has had to disburse from £100 to

£3,000 under this very reasonable piece of legislation. It so happened that on the day of the looting, the shop of a small jeweller in North Street —a thoroughfare that fifty years ago was undoubtedly squalid—was one of those that suffered at the hands of the mob. It was an establishment with a ground floor of 15 ft. by 12 ft., and the valuation of the whole premises was probably £25 per annum; but the proprietor was fortunate enough to receive, I believe, £200 by way of compensation for his loss, and the next that was heard of him was that he had taken a shop at the corner of Donegall Place and Castle Place—absolutely the finest site in the town; and a more fortunate move could not have been imagined, for in the course of a few years his business became one of the most important in Ireland. It was not, however, until 1879 that he thought of trying his fortune in London, and he started an establishment to which he gave the name of The Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company, and which he controlled, without relinquishing the Belfast house of William Gibson and Co., until both businesses were floated and are maintaining a course of prosperity that few people could believe to have originated in the looting of a tiny shop in what was then a filthy street that most people avoided as much as possible.

ROYAL AVENUE, BELFAST, FROM "GIBSON'S CORNER."

At this time, in spite of the efforts of the clergymen of both creeds, and in spite also of the efforts of six hundred constabulary and twelve hundred soldiers, infantry and cavalry, the town was practically in the hands of a mob for over a month. Then some hundreds of special constables were sworn in, most of them being well-set-up young men, and armed with batons, and they patrolled the streets in force every night for some time. Shortly afterwards the usual autumn monsoon set in, and everyone who has lived on the coast of Ulster knows what this means: the rains descended and the floods came. Experience shows that while rioters do not mind the hottest fire, they object strongly to a cold shower of rain. There was no show after the first deluge. The mills, the foundries, and the shipbuilding yard resumed work. A few of the rioters who had been taken red-handed were brought to trial at the next Assizes and received what were called "exemplary sentences." Later there was a Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Government—how long ago it seems when one remembers that Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister!—and there were, of course, several "findings," the most important being the dissolution of the old Town Police and the substitution of the Irish Constabulary

for that body of mediæval watchmen to whose incapacity I have already referred.

It is unnecessary to say that such a change was not at all to the taste of a good many of the townspeople, including those who lived by crime. The Constabulary had a reputation for vigilance which made the latter feel despondent, and of expensiveness which made the ratepayers grumble. But I am sure that all people of sense were ready to acknowledge how inadequate was the old force to discharge even the most ordinary duties of police. I had an opportunity in later years of learning a good deal about the inner life of the old "watch," and all that I heard I had a chance of proving, and the result was to convince me that, leaving religion out of the question, the people of the town must have been the most law-abiding to be found in any community. If they had not been so, the town would not have been fit to live in, so utterly lacking were the police in every quality that one looks for from a peace force.

When, in 1865, the Irish Constabulary assumed the guardianship of the rapidly-growing town, it seemed as if the outbreak of a riot was impossible. The whole town was splendidly patrolled by these fine men—the finest and most highly qualified police

force in the world—carrying, not batons, but short, steel side arms, with serrated blade, capable of dealing death in a moment, and, when on special duty, the famous Irish Constabulary carbine, which was imitated by every cavalry and infantry force on the Continent before the introduction of the Snider and the variations of the "needle gun" type.

The Constabulary were, of course, under the control of the Crown, the same as the Dublin Metropolitan police have always been; and this was felt by the friends of the Town Council to cast a slur upon their administration, for they had the sole control of the incapables. Perhaps their apprehension was well grounded; it should have been, at any rate—but in the course of a short time, no grumblings were heard. There were two Parliamentary Elections in Belfast during the next few years; but only the most trifling disturbances took place—quite unlike the good old days when Party feeling ran high, and the store of election eggs that had been accumulating and adding fragrance to the cellars in Ann Street, where it was understood they were stored for the years preceding the event, were got rid of in and around the hustings in an hour or two.

There can be no doubt that the honour and glory which accrued to the Constabulary during the

Fenian years of 1865-6-7 gave the local members a footing among the passionate Loyalists of Belfast and Ulster generally which, in other circumstances, they might not have found so soon. In Belfast I know that the impression which prevailed among the Protestants was that it was a Papist force, but when the news came of the activity of the Constabulary in arresting the Dublin Fenians—of the attacks made upon the Police Barracks in many directions by the Secret Society that had named the day for the proclamation of an Irish republic, the splendid loyalty of the force was applauded by the loyal population of Ulster; and when the Royal Warrant was published making them the Royal Irish Constabulary, there was no voice of disapproval heard throughout industrial Ulster.

CHAPTER III

MOB RULE IN BELFAST

BUT while we were hearing in Belfast of Head Centres and other treason-mongers of the comic-opera sort, and their ambition to set up a South American republic in Dublin—when we were hearing of sentences of hanging, drawing, and quartering being pronounced upon some moderately respectable people, and of penal servitude upon others scarcely so respectable, the most emphatic representatives of Ulster loyalty were complaining bitterly of the state of the law which prevented people from marching in a procession with sashes and banners and bands of many drums and one small fife, to proclaim their loyalty in the face and in the ears of those who were suspected of not being quite so loyal. There was in force a horrid Party Processions Act, which made Orange demonstrations and the playing of party tunes in public illegal; and though many petitions were presented to Parliament for the

repeal of this restrictive legislation, all were rejected by a succession of Governments, who failed to see that there was any difference between a demonstration of loyalty to the Crown and one to protest against the existence of a Crown and to advocate its abolition by the employment of a bomb. The Government had found that each form of demonstration was offensive to the other, and they insisted on the "no offence" policy being maintained. The consequence was that both parties were offended, and each tried to outdo the other in evading the law.

Then there suddenly came to the front a country gentleman whose name was William Johnston, and who was the owner of a small estate known as Ballykilbeg, which, being translated, means the village of the little church. This Mr. Johnston joined the Orange Institution at an early age, and in course of time became Grand Master or something of the Brotherhood for County Down. He had been foremost on many platforms in denouncing the restrictions placed by law upon public demonstrations of Orange loyalty, and in 1867, I think, he took the advice of some friends, and gave notice that he intended to defy the law and to head a procession with banners and sashes and such music as could be thumped out of a band of ten drums and one fife.

He carried out his promise, and was arrested before he had come to the last item in his programme. He was tried at the next assizes at Downpatrick, and, being found guilty, was sentenced to some months' imprisonment, with, if I remember right, one or two of his friends. He did not serve the whole term of his sentence; and on being released he was at once adopted as the Orange candidate at the next election, when he was promptly returned to the House of Commons by the electors of Belfast, his mandate being the repeal of the Party Processions Act.

It may be mentioned here that, after a conflict of many years, he achieved his purpose; but of so little importance did the better class of the electors consider his aims, that his election was opposed by Conservatives as well as Liberals not only in 1868, but at other times as well. Mr. Johnston, however, was the nominee of the strongest party in Ulster, and as they considered themselves incapable of enjoying an existence from which the music of many drums was excluded, they gave Mr. Johnston their undivided support at all times, with the result that no candidate had a chance against him in a contested election. He was indeed a thorn in the flesh of those Conservatives who believed that it was possible to imagine a Government propaganda

that had not as a foremost article the repeal of the Party Processions Act.

Subsequently the hero of Ballykilbeg accepted a Government appointment commensurate with his abilities, and he became an Inspector of Fisheries in Ireland with a salary of close upon £600 a year. This necessitated his retirement from Parliament, and the "regular" Conservative party believed that they had got rid of their thorn without any surgical operation of a drastic nature. In a short time, however, Mr. Johnston perceived that in his absence from the deliberations of the House of Commons the most important interests of the country were being allowed to drift. Without resigning his office, he took a prominent part in some public matter in opposition to the Liberal Government of the day. He was reminded by Earl Spencer, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, that, as a Civil Servant, he was exceeding his privileges, and he replied in a letter the tone of which certainly lacked the penitent note of the prodigal. The next day brought to him an official reply in the form of a document dismissing him from his post at the fishery office, and letting him once more loose upon his party. At the next election for a division of Belfast he was opposed by the Conservative Association, a barrister named Seeds, belonging to a

well-known local family, being brought forward against him. But once again the fighting party in the constituency proved their allegiance to their old leader, and returned him by an immense majority as their representative to the scene of his former triumphs. But when the Coalition Unionist Government came into power they did not see their way to give him a new appointment—not even that of Chief Secretary for Ireland, to which a good many of his supporters thought him entitled, nor that of Resident Magistrate in some district where his many amiable qualities would have a good chance of being appreciated. He had not the easy-going political conscience of Mr. T. W. Russell, who, from being one of the most staunch of Unionists, found no great difficulty in getting in touch with the Home Rulers and receiving from them an appointment as the head of a Department which a much better man had worked up to a point of prosperity such as was unknown to any of Mr. Russell's concerns. Mr. Johnston was never otherwise than a consistent politician, and he died as he had lived, true to those principles which he knew to be the principles of the largest section of the population of his native province.

I have touched so far upon the career of William Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, because I think it has a

very intimate bearing upon the question of the attitude of Ulster at the present moment. Johnston was the representative of what may be called the belligerent party in Ulster from the days when it seemed to most sensible people there was nothing to fight about. The Liberal party of 1868 returned as one of the members for Belfast a Mr. Thomas McClure, a wealthy, elderly merchant, good-natured, and having many friends—a man who could no more grasp the bearing of a Government policy than he could make a speech that did not violate every rule of grammar and pronunciation, but who could be trusted to follow his leader into the right lobby at a division, and to be always in his place to do so. They were not mistaken in their man: he did "a power of following," as they say in the South; and he was rewarded by a baronetcy by Mr. Gladstone. The Liberal party was probably the more intelligent of the two in Ulster in 1868, and detested the idea of physical force. The Conservatives, outside the extremists, also considered that physical force in politics was to be strongly condemned—the judges in Dublin were condemning it to the tune of hanging, drawing, and quartering, with penal servitude for life as the alternative of extreme clemency. Upon every available oppor-

tunity during the career of Mr. Johnston the Executive of the Conservative party continued to show their disapproval of the craving after even so harmless a display of physical force as was represented by the annual demonstration of Orange sashes, and refused to bring any pressure to bear upon the Government to repeal the Party Processions Act. And yet these were the very parties who became associated as one party in 1886 to oppose Home Rule, and who, after consistently opposing it by every constitutional means up to 1912, in that year signed a covenant to withstand by force any attempt to establish Home Rule in Ireland.

But people still ask in England:

"WILL ULSTER FIGHT?"

Almost every year witnessed a riot in Belfast or Londonderry when the Orangemen or Apprentice Boys attempted to hold their demonstrations. In 1869 I had been sent to the neighbourhood of Portadown, a typical Ulster town where industry is subjected to a process of intensive culture. In accordance with the educational theories of my father, who had formulated a form of worship which had no name, though the participators in it called themselves "The Brethren," I was domiciled with a

retired schoolmaster whose reputation for learning gave grounds for some hope that I might gain some Greek from him if I had a mind to do so, so that I might eventually become an authority in adapting texts to suit tenets.

The little town gave me my first experience of what might be called Greater Belfast. It is a town of great prosperity, or that form of prosperity which is represented by large mills working at full time and giving constant employment to thousands of "hands," male and female, all of them housed in comfortable dwellings of the ugliest possible form. The broad river Bann flows through the town and is spanned by a bridge, the appearance of which suggests a prosperity that is founded on proper principles. The large church that "stands in its own grounds" in the middle of the principal street, the substantial houses on each side easing off, so to speak, to make room for the church property, suggests domination on proper principles to all comers.

"Well, what you say may be true," said an Orangeman of an undemonstrative type to a stranger whom he met aboard the Liverpool steamer, and who had been assuring him that the Pope was really a great statesman as well as a worthy man personally. "What you say may be true; but he has a very bad name in Portadown."

So he has. Portadown is eminently Protestant, and believes that it is the plain duty of every Protestant to protest against Popery.

While I was living in the neighbourhood I witnessed one of these protestations, which took the form of huge bonfires in the centre of the street, with a band playing alleged party tunes and a crowd of boys and girls shouting out party expressions while dancing around the blazing pyres.

All at once a body of Constabulary marched up with carbines, and attempted to disperse the crowd. And here I learned the proper way to conduct a street riot. Every boy and girl in the crowd understood the art thoroughly. When the police charged in military fashion, they hurried to one side or the other, refraining from obstructing them in the least, but returning immediately afterward to the place they had occupied before the "charge." At the end of the street the police, encumbered by their carbines, wheeled about and returned to the charge amid the derisive cheers of the crowd, who evaded them by the employment of their previous simple tactics.

But the night was getting on and the people were not getting off, when all at once it seemed to occur to the Constabulary officer, a man named Nunan, who had been promoted from the ranks, that he

should take more active steps to clear the street; and although there was no contending mob in sight or likely to appear, he gave his men orders to load with ball and to fire upon the crowd. In spite of the remonstrances of some gentlemen who were endeavouring to get the crowd to disperse, the order was carried out, and one man was killed on the spot and several others were wounded.

That was the end of the night's frolic. The crowd dispersed—with the exception of the killed and wounded; but for the next week no policeman dared to show his face in the street. Two hundred infantry were sent for from Armagh, and their friendliness helped to soothe the angry townspeople until the inquest upon the man who had been killed came to a close, with a verdict of manslaughter against the Constabulary officer—who, by the way, was a Roman Catholic, and known to be greatly prejudiced against Protestant demonstrations. The town quieted down, but at the Assizes the Crown Counsel entered a *nolle prosequi* in the case, and the man was given another command.

I record this case not because it impressed my boyhood very deeply, but because it shows, I think, how easily an evil reputation may become accidentally attached to any locality. For years after the "riot" in Portadown the town was regarded as

a place that needed to be watched by policemen with loaded carbines, lest another outbreak should take place, jeopardising the lives of innocent people.

Many other towns throughout Ulster have a reputation for being quarrelsome when it comes to a question of whether a provocative procession shall be allowed to challenge the inhabitants to retaliate or not; but while I am ready to deplore with the most deplorable of men the inflammatory constituents of a barrel of gunpowder which has exploded, I have always felt that a good deal of blame should attach to the man who throws in the lighted match and runs away. Of course, to liken any community to a barrel of gunpowder is not to speak in favour of its pacific qualities. I cannot truthfully say that my experience gives me confidence in the self-restraint of any of the smaller towns in Ulster to resist an explosion when once the match is thrown.

And so we are brought back to the original question of the possibility of fighting taking place in Ulster.

My mature acquaintance with the recrimination of the rival factions in Belfast was of a more intimate character than my introduction to these "riotous operations." (I trust that this phrase, which is founded on the definition of the campaign in the Sudan by a great master of definition as not

war but merely "warlike operations," will hurt the susceptibilities of no one.)

Between the years 1870 and 1886 there were several outbreaks in the seismic area of the city—that part in which the streaks of disagreement lie in parallel lines running northward. On the Shankill Road are the dwellings of Protestants, only the publicans and pawnbrokers being Romanists. Not far from being parallel to this road is the Falls, inhabited almost entirely by Romanists. Between these two chief arteries leading out of the city and into a picturesque region of hills and meadows and waterbrooks, are countless streets of workmen's houses, some rows occupied by Protestants and others by Romanists. Now, anyone passing through these localities will perceive, on being made aware of the respective creeds of the inhabitants and of the spirit of animosity which is inhaled by all from their earliest years, how easy it is for a riot to be started. I referred just now to gunpowder, but in this neighbourhood I feel that I must think in dynamite.

The electric spark that has brought to a newspaper an account of a sneer by a Cabinet Minister at an article in the political creed of either party is sufficient to bring about an explosion of the subtle elements to be found in this sensitive locality. A

stone thrown on the Falls has been known to put the whole Shankill into a state of conflagration, and to close several mills and more than one foundry whose hands are to be counted by the thousand. In 1872 and 1874 there were outbreaks lasting for weeks, paralysing the chief industries of the city and costing many lives, directly as well as indirectly. With intervals of only a year or two the old fight was resumed, and invariably in the same locality. But with such vigilance and patience and tact did the Constabulary do their duty that, with the exception of the payment of a few thousand pounds every year for malicious injuries and the sentencing of a dozen corner boys for what one of their accusers from the South called "righteous conduct," no great harm was done until 1886, when Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill was rejected by the House of Commons.

During the first five years of this decade there had come about in Belfast and in Ulster generally among all respectable people in the province, whether they called themselves Liberals or Conservatives, a feeling that the Government should be supported in their endeavour to suppress these outrages in Ireland at which civilisation was standing aghast. Every day was bringing its tale of murder and maiming and boycotting and other

forms of crime committed in the name of Nationalism in almost every part of the country. The acts of barbarity, against which not a Nationalist newspaper protested, did not culminate in the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and his Under-Secretary upon the day the former had landed in Ireland, for after that crime the atrocities were continued as freely as before; and it was taken as a matter of course in Ulster that Liberals and Conservatives, however they might continue to differ on some points, would sink their differences in order to combat the appalling state of affairs in the Southern and Western Provinces. All the repressive measures introduced by Mr. Gladstone between 1880 and 1883 were supported by the Conservatives, though they had protested against the inadequacy of the Land Bill and the extension of the franchise to Ireland by the measure of 1884. Even when it was made perfectly clear that Mr. Gladstone had empowered a certain Roman Catholic and Nationalist Member of Parliament to negotiate with the Vatican, as he himself had negotiated with Mr. Parnell at Kilmainham, for aid in his efforts to put down crime in Ireland, the act of the Conservative members in supporting his coercion measures was warmly approved of. And even when Mr. Gladstone denied that Mr. Errington was entrusted

by him to treat with the Vatican, and then created him a baronet, presumably for having neglected his Parliamentary duties for two sessions, the Liberals of the Northern Province only shrugged their shoulders; there were some of the more liberal-minded Liberals who asked was there any particular reason why the Prime Minister should not try to gain the influence of the Vatican to effect so laudable a purpose?

But they kept their eye upon him, so to speak.

And then came the crash which awakened all Ulster, and brought about such a change as had not been known in the province since the Union had been effected. Mr. Gladstone's Government had resigned, owing to a hostile division in June, 1885, and Lord Salisbury had formed a Ministry, on the understanding that a General Election should take place in the autumn; and Parliament shortly afterwards was dissolved.

Then came rumours that Mr. Gladstone was not so strong as he had been in his feeling against Home Rule; but his supporters throughout Ulster brushed aside all suggestions to this effect; and when his Manifesto was published, it showed that they were justified in their attitude—according to one interpretation of its somewhat ambiguous phrases, though

there were some people who affirmed that the meaning of the doubtful phrases was dependent on which way the electoral cat was going to jump. In effect, Mr. Gladstone asked for such a majority as would enable him to deal with the Home Rulers independently of the value of their vote in the House of Commons.

Well, the result of the General Election was not to place Mr. Gladstone in the position which he coveted. The cat had jumped, and he had marked the place where the capricious animal had alighted. The Government of Lord Salisbury had been accused of coquetting for the support of the Nationalist party, and on the day of the assembling of the new Parliament their first move in confirmation of the rumour may have suggested a desire to carry on a flirtation, but, if so, it was assuredly on the principle adopted by Petruchio, for it took the form of a notice to renew the Coercion Act in Ireland for another period.

There was a division. The Gladstonians and the Nationalists trooped into the same lobby, and the Home Rule Katherine was, in the Ulster idiom, "too many" for the Conservative Petruchio. The Government were defeated, and at the same moment Mr. Gladstone became a Home Ruler. The scales had fallen from the eyes of the persecutor of the

Faithful, and instead of going on to Damascus he remained to condemn his Party to disruption.

Instantaneous conversions are phenomena with which Ulster has been familiar for many years, and there has always been an uncertainty in the province as to the agency by which they are produced. But in the case of Mr. Gladstone there was no room to doubt the source of his conviction of sin. I do not think that there were three Liberals occupying positions of any prominence who were not shocked. And even when the phenomenon ran its usual course, and the news came that Earl Spencer, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Morley had all been miraculously affected, following their leader, there was no tendency in the same direction shown by any of the Liberal party in Ulster. Only one prominent member of the party seemed to be watching the next jump of the political cat, and during this period of watching and keeping silent he was made Lord Lieutenant of a county by Mr. Gladstone on his return to power and patronage. A month later this gentleman—whose claims to such a position as had never previously been held except by a great landowner, were quite inconsiderable—seemed to have satisfied himself in regard to the next jump, and he went in with his friends against Mr. Gladstone.

The political parties in the province had now become two—Unionists and Separatists. What differences had been between the Conservatives and the Liberals had become, as I have already said, insignificant in the face of the impending danger; and this has been the position of the parties during the twenty-eight years that have elapsed since the name Liberal as a political designation disappeared from Ulster. The old Liberals and the old Conservatives have worked together without the slightest friction.

This happy union was accomplished before his Home Rule Bill had been formulated by Mr. Gladstone in the April of 1886; and between this date and the defeat of the measure, two months later, there had been some singular occurrences in some parts of the province. It had been taken for granted by the Roman Catholics that nothing could prevent the attainment of their hopes, and they began to act accordingly. "Our turn is coming now," cried one of them to me, "and, by God, we'll learn you what we can do!" He was a dealer in old furniture in a small way in the poorest part of the city, and although he looked on me as a good customer who should not be offended, he allowed his feelings to get the better of him. While I tried to accept his threat as a joke, I could see that the expression on the faces of the old clothes dealers who were at

their shop-doors in the same unsavoury neighbourhood bore out the note of triumph which my friend had sounded. The last time that I was in Belfast, precisely the same exultation greeted me when I met another man in a slightly better way of life. But I may mention that these were the only sort of Home Rulers with whom I ever had a chance of coming in contact in Ulster. When Lord Morris said to Lady Aberdeen, on her asking him at one of the Viceregal receptions if he would have the hardihood to tell her that there were no Home Rulers in all that assemblage, "Oh, no; there's His Excellency and the waiters," he defined very fairly the situation as it was in Ulster in my day, and as I believe it is to-day. I never sat down to table with a Home Ruler in Ulster. I never met with one in any society that I frequented. If it had not been that my attempts to collect old furniture forced me into slums, I believe that I should have left Ireland without ever having knowledge of speaking to an Irish Nationalist in Ulster. I have asked people in Belfast if they had ever seen one, and most of them replied, "Oh, dear, yes; I have seen Willie Pirrie." Their "Willie Pirrie" was Lord Pirrie. It may be mentioned that this distinguished peer was not one of the Liberal party who joined Mr. Gladstone after his miraculous conversion. He was then a prominent Liberal-Unionist. But he

felt his way across the perilous bridge by the light of the gems of the coronet which he saw gleaming at the other side.

In the interval between the introduction of the Home Rule measure and its rejection there were, I have good reason for believing, several "raffles" for desirable properties at that time held by Unionists. There was no intention on the part of the Nationalists to rush things, but they thought it as well to be prepared for the great change they believed to be impending when the anticipations of my friend would be realised and their "turn" should come. Thus it was that lots were drawn for certain houses, with the grounds, timber, and live-stock. Several gentlemen were surprised to come suddenly upon strangers measuring their lawns and examining their fences. One of them told me in Belfast that he was dining with his family early in June, when, glancing out of a window, he saw a stranger on the lawn. He casually asked if the business on which the man had come was being attended to, but no one seemed to know anything of him or his business. At the end of dinner he was still outside, and my friend went to him through the door leading on to the garden, and, bidding him good-evening, inquired who it was he represented and if his business was receiving attention. The

man replied, with equal civility, that he had merely come to have a good look at the place, as he had been fortunate enough to win it in the raffle of the night before, when several first-class properties had been dealt with by the Nationalist club to which he belonged.

The defeat of the Bill was, naturally, a blow to the men who had been led to believe that the change, which would have resulted in the course of time from the passing of the Home Rule measure, would be more rapidly brought about than even "an old man in a hurry" would think advisable. I have often tried to account for this credulousness on the part of hard-headed people, and I am of the opinion that it must have been due to the discussion there was going on in the Conservative papers about the necessity for a redistribution of seats in Ireland, in order to prevent so gross an anomaly as six thousand bog-trotters in Connaught having the same representation as twenty thousand of the inhabitants of Middlesex; and somehow they mistook the drift of the phrase "redistribution of seats"; they thought it alluded to country seats, and so believed that they would do well to participate in so desirable a scheme at the earliest possible moment—in fact, a little earlier still.

I remember that as I made my way homeward on

the lovely June morning when the Bill was thrown out, although it was only four o'clock, I was met by groups of working men who had risen two or three hours before their usual time and come forth from their homes to learn the result of the division in the House of Commons; and when I told them that the Bill had been defeated, the cheers that filled the air at the news surprised the policemen at the corners, and when they strolled up in their dignified way to inquire what all the noise was about, they made no attempt to repress this miniature demonstration, though, as a rule, they took care that no voice should ever be raised in the streets of the city during the sleeping hours. But, of course, no expression of opinion came from any of the Constabulary in regard to the action of the majority of the House of Commons. The Royal Irish Constabulary are the enigma of Ireland.

As I continued my walk homeward, first through the broad thoroughfares of the city and then through the broad highway of the southern suburbs, I met scores of the same class of the population who had left their houses in the side streets, and especially in the ultra-Protestant Sandy Row, the scene of many a fierce encounter between the two religious factions, to put to me in their own idiom and staccato pronunciation the burning question:

"Is them 'uns bate?"

And when I assured them that the unspeakable Nationalists had been beaten by a good majority, once more cheers were raised. I was slapped familiarly on the back by half-dressed "Islandmen" (the shipwrights) with shouts of "Bully wee fella!" as though the defeat of the measure was due to my personal exertions; and I remember how the blinds of the bedrooms of many of the best houses on the road were pulled to one side, while the sunshine of the early morning disclosed white figures beyond thrusting a head forward to see what was happening. Some way further on, where the villas of the suburb began, I was surprised to hear myself hailed by name by someone at a window beyond the shrubbery of a carriage-drive I found myself responding to the director of one of the chief banks. He told me he had been unable to sleep during the night, and he had risen and sat at his open window to await my passing with news. At two other houses of the same type I found gentlemen awaiting my arrival, and at one of these it was with difficulty that I managed to get away without drinking the health of the majority who had caused the Bill to be thrown out—that was the penalty which the wealthy damask merchant suggested I should pay for having lifted a great weight from his mind. A tumbler of whiskey at 4.30 on a lovely

summer morning! Only the hospitable impulses of a Belfast man would have been equal to such a suggestion.

The next night, however, the streets were full of an excited people. The Roman Catholic clergy had issued strict commands to their flocks to remain within their houses, or within the boundaries of their own localities, so that they might not be tempted to respond to the insults which they would be certain to receive from "the other side." This advice had been accepted, though not without grumbling; but it was undoubtedly the best that could have been offered to the people. The high spirits of "the other side" might have been displayed through a medium familiar to both. As it was, the music of the Unionist bands of Sandy Row and the Shankill Road began playing as early as six o'clock, and there were processions and noise and excitement in the principal thoroughfares until long past midnight. In several directions bonfires had been lighted within half-an-hour after sunset, and some were still burning when I passed them at three o'clock in the morning, and boys were watching the expiring embers.

It is unnecessary to say that the Police Commissioner and his officers were extremely uneasy during these days. One of them, who afterwards

rose to the highest command in the Force, told me that, in his opinion, if that Home Rule Bill had passed, all the Constabulary in the city would not have been able to prevent such a wrecking of the Roman Catholic quarters as would have changed the whole aspect of the municipality—"wrecking and massacre," were his words; and before another fortnight had passed I agreed with him, for by that time fifteen hundred armed men were unable to drag the city out of the hands of the rioters, and for seven weeks there were daily fights, and these not confined, as previous outbreaks had been, to the usual area of disturbance between the Protestant Shankill and the Roman Catholic Falls, but on the Crumlin Road and the Antrim Road, in the very centre of the town, and through the mile length of York Street, excited mobs had passed, breaking windows and looting shops. They were charged by troops of Lancers, and by bayonets of Highlanders, and by fixed swords of the Constabulary; the hospitals were crowded with wounded men, women, and children, and there was not a newspaper in the city that had not on its staff a reporter who was limping in his walk, or with an arm in a sling, or a head bound up.

One never knew in what direction an attack would be made. The chief streets were, of course,

lined with troops. But an orderly would come galloping down Castle Street with a message to the commanding officer to bring his men up at the double to some locality where a fight was going briskly on; and once I was in conversation with a mounted officer of Constabulary when an A.D.C. to Major-General Montgomery-Moore galloped up to ask for reinforcements for the Highlanders who were in difficulties in a locality fully a mile and a half away! I felt that that sort of thing was closely akin to actual warfare. At any rate, the scene in that very wide and long thoroughfare, York Street, one night, let me know more about the tactics of street fighting than any previous experience of mine had done. I had been through a very nasty Malay riot at Cape Town, and had been a spectator of "riotous operations" in Trafalgar Square, as well as in some of the disturbed districts of Ireland, North and South, but none of the principals in these actions knew anything of strategy, compared with those who engineered the sacking of York Street upon that dark night in August, 1886. The lamps had nearly all been extinguished—perhaps they had not been lighted at all—but when I came to the mouth of the road, scarcely a light was to be seen; still I had no difficulty in making out the movements of the dense crowds surging in every direction, and shot after

shot I heard above the shouts that suggested something very like Pandemonium. Once or twice I was carried along in the rush of people before a police charge, and I was taught in the most practical way how to avoid a casualty; for I was simply hurried through the street and into the nearest by-lane, where I was forced to stand with the rest of the fugitives until the projectile, in the form of a squad of police or soldiers, had charged past. Then I was allowed a leisurely return to the field of battle.

A little of this was quite enough to serve my purpose. I began to feel that if I remained much longer, I might not be able to write out my comments on the scene in a perfectly unprejudiced way, so I sneaked down a narrow side street and, after a time, emerged from the purlieus of the fighting area. I felt that I had learned something of the impotence of every arm except artillery in the case of street fighting. I felt that I knew what the great Commander meant when he talked about that "pinch of grape."

Last year, I was one of the guests at a lunch given by a private gentleman in honour of Lord Roberts, and with the Veteran only a few seats away on the other side of the table, I said something to a great handler of Artillery who sat next to me,

about the street fighting in Delhi that cost poor Nicholson his life, and about Lord Roberts' fine account of it. My companion responded sympathetically and scientifically; and his experience of street fighting also in India showed me that the mob in Belfast had acted instinctively in accordance with the most effective tactics of the wiliest street fighters in the world.

The riots went on for several weeks, and all classes in the city were thoroughly demoralised. The military detested their duty, and the Constabulary were making no impression on the rioters—on the contrary, it seemed that the rioters were making a marked impression on the Constabulary. One of the finest of the officers of the Force received a wound on the head which left its mark upon him, and two others were incapacitated after a few days' experience. After the fourth week of the disturbances, I recollect coming upon a police officer with whom I had been on the most familiar terms for years.

"I'm sorry you are having such a bad time; but I fancy we have seen the worst of it," I said.

"Oh, yes, yes; we must have got over the worst of it," said he. And then I noticed a queer look in his eyes, and this prevented my being startled when he added,

"By the way, I seem to remember your face; but will you kindly tell me who you are?"

"Do you remember how long it is since you had a sleep?" I asked.

"I haven't closed my eyes for four nights," he replied.

Several ludicrous incidents took place while the town was crowded with Constabulary who had been brought hastily from the country districts. A reporter told me that he was a witness of an earnest remonstrance on the part of a young policeman with a tramcar driver, whom he advised to take his "waggon" down some of the side streets, in order to escape the angry crowd that had assembled farther up the road. Upon another occasion, a grocer's shop had been looted by the mob at night, and a man had been fortunate enough to secure a fine ham which he was endeavouring, but with only partial success, to secrete beneath his coat—a whole ham takes a good deal of secreting. The police had orders to clear the street, and they were endeavouring to obey these orders. The man with the ham received a push on his shoulder, and the policeman by whom it was dealt, shouted out in a fine, rich Southern brogue (abhorred in Belfast), "Git along wid ye, you and yer violin! Is this any toime for ye to be after lookin' to foind an

awjence? Ye'll get that violin broke, so ye will."

The man was only too glad to hurry off with his "Strad," of fifteen pounds weight, mild-cured. He did not wait to explain that there was a difference between the viol and "loot."

One of the country policemen made an arrest of a man whom he saw in the act of throwing stones, and the next day he gave his evidence at the Police Court very clearly. He had ascertained that the scene of the arrest was York Street, and he said so; but the street was about a mile long, and the magistrate wished to know at what part of it the incident had occurred.

"It was just outside the cimitery, yer wash'p," replied the man.

"The cemetery?" said the magistrate. "But there's no cemetery in York Street."

"Oh, yes, yer wash'p—there's a foine cimitery there," said the policeman. "It was just outside the cimitery I arrested the prisoner."

"It's the first I've heard of a cemetery in that neighbourhood," said the Bench. "Don't you think that the constable is mistaken, sergeant?"

The sergeant put a few questions to the witness, and asked him how he knew that the place was a cemetery.

"Why, how would anybody know a cimitery ex-

cept by the tombstones?" said the witness. "I didn't go for to dig up a corp or two, but there was the foinest array of tombstones I ever clapt oyes on."

"It's the stonecutter's yard the man means," came a voice from the body of the court; and in another moment there was a roar of laughter from all present.

The arrest had been made outside a stonecutter's railed yard, and the strange policeman had taken the numerous specimens of the proprietor's craft, which were standing around in various stages of progress, for the *bonâ fide* furnishing of a graveyard.

He was scarcely to be blamed for his error.

I believe that it was during these riots the story originated—it is now pretty well known, I think—of the man who had caught a policeman, and was holding his head down while he battered him, when a brother rowdy rushed up, crying,—

"Who have you there, Bill?"

"A policeman."

"Hold on, and let me have a thump at him."

"Git along out of this, and find a policeman for yourself!"

It need scarcely be said that "riot duty" is never popular with the Army. Looking at it from the

most mercenary standpoint, it does not pay its way. A friend of mine who was in command of a company of the Highlanders in Belfast at this time, told me that his full dress kilt had been ruined in the course of the month; and all the compensation that he received for the loss amounted to 15*s.* 10*d.*

He told me also that everywhere he took his men they had been cheered by the mobs.

But even this demonstration of friendliness did not, in the estimation of the Scotsman, make up for the damage done to his best kilt.

But perhaps the most ludicrous incident in connection with these riots was their ending. It was, as happened once before, the change of the summer weather to autumn. The ugliest mob that had yet evaded the combined forces of Cavalry and Infantry, were carrying out their Hindu tactics when the rains began. The aggressive crowd rushed down one of the side streets. The police did not follow them, but doubled down the next, and waited for them to emerge. But they never emerged. They did not mind facing the Constabulary, but they declined to face the rain. They took refuge in the houses of their friends for the time being, and an hour or two later, they slunk out and went home. That rain lasted, as a shower does in Ulster, for three days, and, as a dreadful rascal who had taken part in the campaign told me a long time afterwards, that rain

"took the heart out of the fighting." It certainly seemed to have this effect, for not another skirmish was recorded.

It may, therefore, I think, be said that the spirit of Resistance to Authority got the better of Authority in Belfast at that time. The "honour rooted in dishonour" of the campaign lay with the incivility of the civilians. I always recall this fact when I hear people around me in England gravely discussing the question,

"WILL ULSTER FIGHT?"

I do not for myself see very vividly a battery of artillery limbering up in Donegall Place, nor do I see the "case begin to spread" down Royal Avenue, because I know that no battery of English guns would ever be brought into action against the inhabitants of an English city such as Belfast is to-day; and also because I know that no hostile battery would have a man left to fight a single gun by the time it would have reached Bridge Street from Donegall Quay. I have seen how little value troops are to put down a disturbance in a few streets of a large city even when every respectable inhabitant is hostile to the disturbers of the peace, and I have, I trust, sufficient imagination to know what would happen when every respectable person has gone over to the other side.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRUE ULSTERMAN

THE more I saw of Ulster and the more closely I became acquainted with the people, the more did it seem to me that the Province was like a piece hacked out of Britain somewhere between the Tweed and the Tyne. One might fancy that the original colonists had been the progeny of Scotch Lowlanders and English Highlanders. The two peoples are not to be found blended. The northern Englishman can never be taken for the southern Scotsman, but the Ulsterman has often seemed to me to be a roughly-forged link between the two. He exhibits the virtues—and other characteristics—of both. If a great chasm were to be made between the Tweed and the Tyne, and Ulster dropped into it, the Ulsterman would feel himself very much at home; his neighbours on the North would be gratified to find him as addicted to church-going as themselves, and those on the South would find him

GLENARIFF, CO. ANTRIM.

as difficult to get the better of as if he were a Scotsman born.

The Ulsterman has the racial characteristics of his ancestors, who were English and Scotch. At the original planting of the colony there was a very stringent law against marriage with the native Irish; but it is recorded that in the course of a few years this law was disregarded, and the colonists followed the example of the nomad Israelites in looking favourably upon the daughters of Heth, and of the godly troopers of Cromwell's army in the South in regard to the daughters of the mere Irish. But the racial influences of such unions in Ulster has been extraordinarily small. During all the years of my association with Ulstermen I never met but one who possessed any of the characteristics of the truly typical Irishman as he is known all over the world, and to some extent still in Ireland itself, in spite of the efforts of a certain Celtic handful who try to make us believe that the typical Irishman is as dull as themselves. This exceptional person was the late Colonel Saunderson.

That is where the tragedy of Ulster comes in just now. The Ulsterman has failed to assimilate himself to the Irishman. If he goes South or West, he feels himself as much an alien as his ancestors must have felt themselves on arriving in Ulster.

But when he goes to Scotland or to the North of England he has no impression of being among strangers.

It is really remarkable that, while the English settlers in the other Provinces became proverbially more Irish than the Irish themselves, and founded some great Irish families, the Ulster colonists still remain coldly and severely apart, looking on the Irish with a suspicion that borders closely upon contempt. They have never had anything in common with the Irish, and even when suffering from the same injustice at the hands of the English Government, they always rejected the overtures of the Irish to unite with them in resisting the tyranny. More than once, to be sure, some of them saw no reason why they should not make common cause with the Irish instigators of rebellion; but these were exceptional and eccentric units, and the hearts of their people were not with them. Their own people have always looked with distrust on any scheme, political or social, that had been engineered by the Irish. There is no virtue that the Ulsterman esteems so highly as success, but he would rather fail among Ulstermen than succeed with Irishmen.

Of course, it will be understood that these remarks apply only to the Ulster of the Plantation, which is Protestant and progressive Ulster—the true Ulster—the only Ulster, its inhabitants hold, that

is worth taking account of. But if we look up the census returns—those horrid figured facts that bear about as much resemblance to actual life as the tailor's mannikin does to a human body—we find what a large proportion of Roman Catholic Irish there is still to be found in the province. There are still parts of Ulster that are as much Irish in every way as Clare or Kerry; but visit these parts, the Protestant Ulsterman will tell you, and you will quickly find what they are: poverty-stricken, illiterate, ignorant, superstitious, unprogressive cumberers of the ground, existing only as examples of what Ulster would be to-day if their ancestors had not, by a merciful dispensation of Providence and of that Prince whose name is printed in letters five times greater than any name, sacred or secular, that appears in the open Bible of English Protestantism, come upon the scene to make the province what it now is. The "true" Ulsterman regards the Irish Ulsterman pretty much as Dr. Watts regarded the sluggard, embodying his opinion in deathless verse:

> "Then said I to myself, 'Here's a lesson for thee:
> That man's but a picture of what I might be,
> But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
> Who taught me betimes to love working and reading.'"

The original planters in this vineyard of the High and Mighty Prince James undoubtedly loved work-

ing, but if they loved reading also, it may be said that this quality has not descended to their children, or, if it has, they have dissembled their love for it, possibly through a Calvinistic suggestion that it might become a snare unto them. The Ulsterman is not a great reader to-day, except perhaps of political speeches. Belfast has a population of close upon 400,000, and it has had a University College of its own for over sixty years; and yet for the twenty-five years that I knew it there was not a bookseller's shop in the whole of the city—I mean, of course, a shop where one could be certain of finding a new book about which all England was talking—a volume of travel, biography, or fiction. There was one tradesman who made a small fortune by the sale of defective editions or "remainders" of an edition of a book that had not caught the public fancy; but even when I was buying my first *Principia Latina* or the *Initia Græca*, these books had to be ordered from Mr. Murray. The usual Free Public Library was not built until the city had a population of over a quarter of a million, and I recollect that the Mayor of the year of its achievement suggested that the selection of the books should be vested in a Committee of the Town Council! I thought it a great pity that his idea was not carried out. The enterprise would then

have become a library and a museum of curiosities in one. The Mayor was a man who had never read a novel in all his life, nor had he ever entered a theatre. When Sir Henry Irving paid a visit to Belfast and acted in *The Bells*, the Mayor was almost induced to put his Calvinistic principles behind him and to attend a performance, his idea being that the piece was somehow a dramatic version of a poem called "The Blue Bells of Scotland," of which he was fond, and he could not see how even the most insidious art of a dramatist could turn such a theme into anything wicked.

The true Ulsterman has rather a contempt for anyone who has the reputation of being "a great reader." Reading and idleness, he has found, always go together; and he is possibly the worst theatre-goer in the world. There are thousands of men and women in the province who have never read a novel or seen a play in a theatre. But the number of the latter was considerably lessened when the solitary theatre that the city possessed was burnt down thirty years ago. The lessee took over the Ulster Hall while the new building was being erected, and this fact enabled many of the inhabitants whose scrupulous conscience would not allow them to enter the porch of a real theatre, even to take shelter from a shower of rain, to become

acquainted with some examples of the stage of that day. They had always been taught that it was a shocking thing to go to a real theatre, but there could not possibly be any harm in going to an ordinary public hall, no matter what might be going on within!

I met a typical Ulster Calvinist at that time who quite frankly expressed his belief that the burning of the theatre was due to a sudden ebullition of Divine wrath at the continued existence of such a place of infamy in the midst of a (nominally) God-fearing community; and I have reason to believe that he was not alone in his recognition of this warning to the profane through a medium that has always been a power in the Ulster pulpit.

But I never could wholly bring myself to regard the connection between the Divine Power and that incident in so lurid a light. And I felt convinced that the man would have relinquished his views respecting the occurrence if he had been present, as I was a short time afterwards, at a certain showy theatre in London; and if he had seen, as I did, the entering of one of the most prominent of Ulster's Presbyterian ministers to witness a performance in which the dresses of the whole *corps de ballet* might have been amply provided for out of the covering of the pulpit cushion! He would surely have attri-

buted the fire which had so demoralised the grave people of the city as to make them aware of the charms of the stage without passing through the door of a theatre, to an agency more frequently associated with that particular medium.

The clergyman, I felt sure, had gone to the Ulster Hall, and, having seen a play on the temporary stage of that building, had been led to fancy, after taking that step, that he might go to another hall in Leicester Square, London, without incurring a greater reproach from his conscience than he could stand.

I will say that he seemed to appreciate the performance to the full, smoking his cigar with the best of them—or the worst of them—until he caught my eye. I fear that that moment was fatal to his evening's pleasure. There was no emergency exit at hand.

He was extremely civil to me when we met afterwards in Belfast, though he had never been so before. I took care to see a good deal of him from time to time, and he was always excessively civil. That was the blackmail I extorted from him.

The true Ulsterman is not a theatre-goer, except when he happens to be in London or Paris, and then he goes further than to the theatre. . . .

The theatre in Belfast was, in my day, supported

by the Celtic population; but, as I have already stated, this class was the least opulent in the city; their support was confined to the pit and the gallery, and the darling of the gods for many years was that once noted exponent of the robust school, Barry Sullivan. I was told many years afterwards, by a man who had been Charles Dickens's manager on his reading tours, that when the great novelist came to Belfast in 1868, the night of his solitary appearance was that of Barry Sullivan's benefit at the theatre. The result was, as might have been expected: the hall where the reading took place was half-empty, but the theatre was crowded.

The true Ulsterman is not a sentimentalist. He prides himself in being eminently practical, and he has good reasons for being satisfied with the progress he has made on the lines he has marked out for himself. When he gives a subscription to a charity, he does not do so anonymously. He gives in a spirit of faith and hope as well as of charity; he looks on his gift in the light of an advertisement, and he would be greatly disappointed if it did not return to him with interest at a trifle over Bank rate. I knew of a wealthy shopkeeper who was understood to give very freely. Among his subscriptions was one to a Roman Catholic "Home" called, I believe, "Nazareth," and the controllers

of the Home were customers of his for groceries. This fact bears out what has frequently been said about all the trade of the city being practically in the hands of Protestants; for there was not a single grocery in Belfast owned by a Roman Catholic capable of supplying the Home on the scale necessary for such an institution. But in the course of a few years a man belonging to this denomination opened a shop, and it came to the ears of the other that the Nazareth people had favoured their co-religionist in the matter of cheese, and when he found out that the report was true, he at once gave notice of his intention to drop his subscription to the charity, and he carried out his threat. In justice to him, however, it should be said that when his rival failed in business and left the city, he met the collectors of subscriptions in a proper Christian spirit and allowed his name to appear in their list of benefactors, taking good care that the name of "Nazareth" appeared again in his ledger. The name "Nazareth"! The grim irony of the transaction was complete.

And yet I frequently used to hear people comment on the broad-mindedness of this grocer in subscribing to a Roman Catholic charity!

But so intense is the strain between the two religions in Belfast that businesses are run on a strictly

denominational basis. I have scores of times heard people say, when their attention was drawn to some particular article of domestic use alleged to be cheaper and better in a certain shop than in another:

"I don't care how cheap it is; I wouldn't lay out a penny in a Catholic shop if I could help it!"

Since then I have found that it is quite possible for political feeling to influence the household books of the inhabitants of more than one English country town quite as potently as "religion" did similar dealings in Ulster. I have known of people withdrawing their custom from certain shops, the proprietors of which had taken a prominent part in a Radical demonstration. I am perfectly certain that if a person situated far beyond the range of the slightest breath of calumny—say, the Lord Chief Justice of England—were to start as a stockbroker to-morrow, there are many otherwise reasonable Conservatives who would refuse to put any business into his hands. Even the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would not inspire confidence in some people, though it were pointed out to them that he had proved himself so capable a master of finance that, after being in a lucrative profession for several years, and retiring from it with, of course, the capitalised value of his partnership in a going concern, and after receiving for eight years a salary of

£5,000 a year and living with the Spartan frugality of his order, he had been able to invest his savings so intelligently as to yield him £400 a year.

It is indeed hard to combat prejudice, whether religious or political, however unreasonable it may be. So that perhaps I have no right to criticise as bigotry in Belfast what is, after all, nothing more than business. First of all, the true Ulsterman is a good business man and a good Protestant. He considers it to be the duty of a good Protestant to protest, and of a good business man to make money. He likes to see everything placed on a proper business basis. One may be sure that he will conduct any campaign in which he may be induced to take a prominent part on a double-entry system, and make every regiment account for every cartridge served out to them. He will have a man posted every here and there with a notebook taking account of every shot fired, and a little later he will take stock, examining the bandoliers of the men and placing in the proper column in his book the credit of the ammunition in hand. He will have a fully-qualified auditor attached to every company, and there will be no canteen scandal in his army.

His business methods will stand to him whatever his future may be, just as they have stood him in good stead in the past.

The Churches of his forefathers were deprived of their endowments, the Church of England of its property, and the Presbyterian Church of the annual *regium donum*—the grant made by William III. on account of its services in the saving of Ireland to the Crown of England. But after his protest as a good Protestant, the Ulsterman, as a business man, set to work to place his religion on a business basis, with the result that to-day both Churches are in a sounder financial condition than any in the world. When he made up his mind to resist his inclusion in the Home Rule scheme, he raised £1,000,000 before anyone on the other side of St. George's Channel knew that he was making any move whatsoever. And he smiled at the ill-kept accounts of the Nationalists, who could not raise in their own country enough to pay their representatives in Parliament, but were compelled to go on begging tours year after year, collecting the dimes and nickels of the artisans and factory hands of New York, Boston, and Chicago. So little do the people of Ireland care for Home Rule, says the true Ulsterman, that they have never shown a willingness to pay the office expenses of the movement, though when any question of raising money for a cathedral, like that at Queenstown, is concerned, a quarter of a million is forthcoming. But this argument

only proves that the southern Irish are better Romanists than they are Home Rulers; and surely this is giving the Irish Romanist a good character.

When you come to this part of the argument, the true Ulsterman puts his tongue in his cheek and suggests (in his own way) that you should ask some honest Roman Catholic (if you could find one) what is his private opinion on the subject of the demands made upon him by his priests for the aggrandisement of his Church.

I took this advice some years ago. I was sojourning in the neighbourhood of a wretched village in the County Limerick—a typical unpicturesque, though squalid, village of one long street, with four or five public-houses, and with an evil-smelling gutter meandering among the rough stones of the roadway until it became at one place deep enough for the ragged children to swim bottles in. Here I came upon a car-driver with whom I had some acquaintance, and I asked him how the little brown mare was.

He shook his head.

"It's thinkin' of sellin' her that I am this day, sir," he replied.

"Why should you do that?" I inquired. "Isn't there plenty of work for both of you hereabouts?

No one would be likely to start a car in opposition to you."

"Oh, there's plenty of work, sir; but isn't everybody startin' off for Ameriky these times?"

"There's no need for anybody living within a mile or two of your Golden Vein to go to America. What have you to complain of here?"

He smiled with a suggestion of pity in his expression, while he said:

"Well, I suppose, sir, there's no satisfying some of us."

"And will America satisfy you, do you think?" I asked.

"Maybe it will, and maybe it won't, sir," said he.

"Now tell me plainly what it is that's driving you all to America," I said.

His smile vanished, and a resentful look came to his eyes.

"I'll show you what's dhrivin' us all to Ameriky," he said, almost fiercely. He threw down his spade and strode round the public-house that was the last building in the street. He did not look to see if I was following him, but I was following him. A small butcher's shop was round the corner, and next to it half a dozen cabins with the corrugated iron roofs now so popular in the South; then we were alongside an ill-kept field of potatoes, and

twenty yards further on there rose in front of us a large, newly-built stone church with a tower and tall spire—a finer church than any in Belfast.

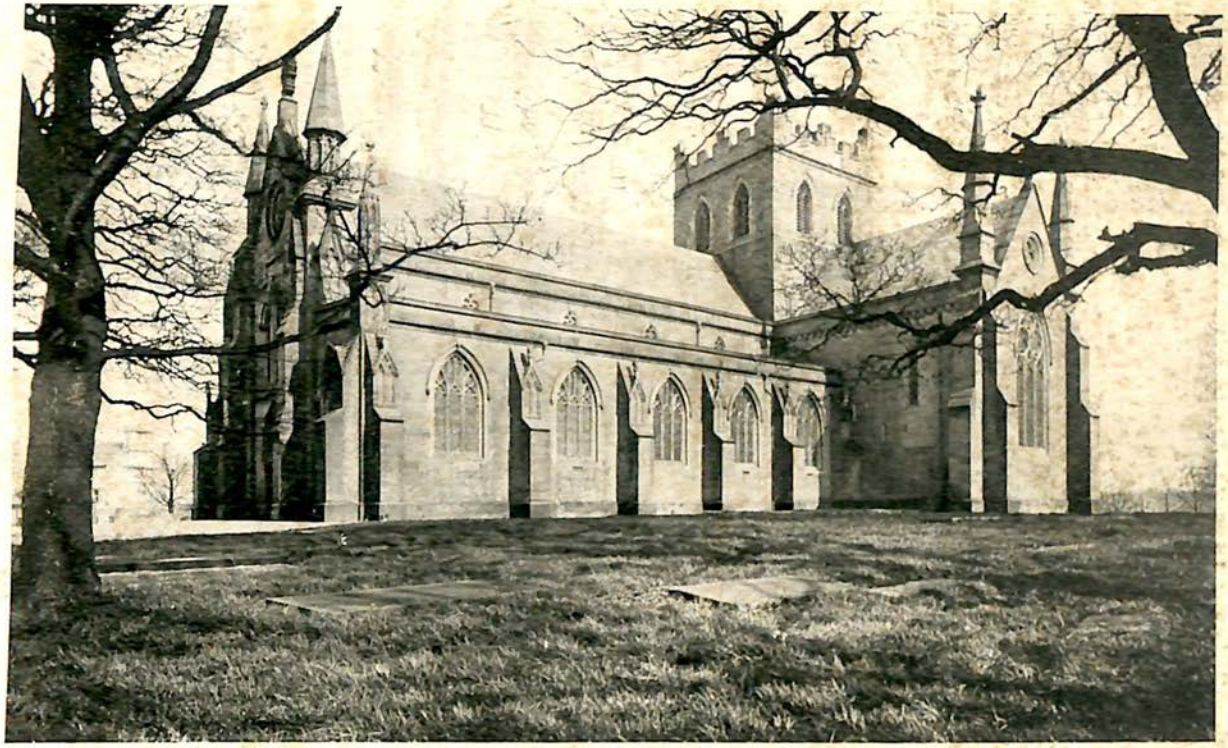
"That's what's dhrivin' us to Ameriky, if you must know," said the car-driver. "If you want to hear what money that cost, the captain will tell you."

"The Captain" was the officer of Constabulary whose guest I had been.

"The Captain" did tell me; and I found myself facing the never-ending Irish question from a new standpoint—but I soon found it was new only to me; it was an old one to the intelligent Roman Catholic doctor with whom I talked that night, and to the intelligent grazier of the same creed with whom I talked the next day. They told me that Queenstown Cathedral would not be completed until the bill had been run up to £200,000!

I recollected how I had been present, ten or twelve years before, at the opening of the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Armagh—a far finer building than the modest cathedral of the other Church—and how I had then wondered where the money had come from to build it; for even the exceptional congregation of that Sunday was nothing to boast of in respect of affluence. But I remembered what the witty Protestant lawyer replied to his Roman Catholic friend who contrasted the generosity of

his Church with the parsimony of the Protestants: "Give me an acre of Purgatory, and I'll raise you a million to-morrow"; and I fancied I could see how these cathedrals got themselves built. I was not sufficiently acute to perceive—well, all that was forced upon me when I paid a long deferred visit to the South, where Protestants and Catholics live side by side on the friendliest terms, and where the noise of the Orange drum does not disturb the peace of the summer evening.



ARMAGH PROTESTANT CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER V

A PRACTICAL COMMUNITY

I FIND that I have wandered far from the Ulsterman; but it is necessary to do so now and again in order to understand him and his ways more fully. I will return to him now in connection with what I said regarding his tenacity in retaining all the characteristics of his ancestors. But before I go any further, I would say emphatically that an Ulsterman would have no difficulty whatever in picking out of an ordinary crowd those persons who are Roman Catholics. If there are three Catholics in a crowd numbering a hundred people of the province whom he has never seen before, he will identify those three after taking a casual glance at the crowd. Of course, if there were any strongly marked racial differences —any easily defined distinction in colouring or form between the Protestant and the Romanist, there would be nothing remarkable in this; but the

identification marks are far too subtle to be susceptible of definition in an ordinary way. Personally, I only remember making a mistake in this connection upon one occasion. The man whom I had taken for a Roman Catholic turned out to be one of the most protesting Protestants I had ever met. But his name was the most distinctly Catholic to be found in the whole province. I had assumed from the look of him that he belonged to the Church of Rome before I heard his name, and when I heard his name I felt that it went very well with him. When I learned that I was wrong, I expressed surprise to several people, but among them there was not one who would have believed that the man was a Protestant like themselves.

When one has been living from one's boyhood in a locality where the power to differentiate in this way is taken for granted, it becomes second nature, and one does not take the trouble to investigate its origin. I am sure that I was in Ulster for twenty years before I asked an intelligent man on what grounds he was able to say definitely that a person was a Catholic. He seemed to be puzzled at such a question.

"Sure, anybody could see by the look of a fellow that he was a Catholic," he replied.

"Yes; but what have you to guide you?" I asked.

"It's not as if the Protestants were all fair and the Catholics all dark, you know."

"Of course it's not; but it's as easy as knowing a sheep from a goat," said he.

"Not quite," said I. "People in England don't confuse sheep with goats, and yet they ridicule the idea of our knowing a Catholic by the look of him."

"But, sure, everyone knows a Catholic face at a glance," he said impatiently, as if he was resenting an attempt on my part to draw him out to make a fool of him.

In a book that recently came into my hand, this power of differentiation on the part of the Ulsterman is ridiculed; but I lived too long in the province to have any doubt on the matter. Scores of times I have heard people say:

"I saw by the look of him (or her) that he (or she) was a Catholic." And I once heard a shopkeeper, when engaging an errand-boy, say to him across the counter: "I see that you're a Catholic," although the boy had not offered him any evidence of his religious convictions apart from the testimony of his face.

I suppose, in the early years of the planting of Ulster, the colonists had the best of reasons for becoming possessed of this faculty to distinguish friend from foe, and it was intensified after the

massacre of 1641; and just as people quickly pick up a language when their daily bread depends upon their proficiency in doing so—just as a shepherd has no difficulty in distinguishing one sheep from another, so the Ulster colonists quickly learned to appreciate certain elements of physiognomy that were too delicate to be defined or explained. Of course, one constantly hears in all parts of Ireland such phrases as "a good Protestant face" or "a clean Protestant-looking house"—I have even heard a Roman Catholic in the South refer in commendation to "a fine Protestant pigsty," and another in the North talk gravely of a domestic servant with "a Protestant accent." These phrases represented a standard of approval universally understood. They did not suggest any special insight on the part of the person making use of them that enabled him (or her) to perceive the exact shade of the religious convictions inherent in a pigsty or a pronunciation.

In the matter of the pronunciation of the English language, there is little to choose between the Protestant and the Catholic of the middle classes in Ulster. Among people who are rather lower in the social scale I have known of quite an extraordinary amount of respect being paid to an English accent. This is observable to even a more marked degree in

the southern provinces. I suppose this is also an hereditary trait of the people; and the cultivation of "an English accent" even by people occupying a good position in society is, or it certainly used to be, thought highly desirable. The effect of the introduction of a streak of English between the layers of the thickest Dublin brogue was ludicrous in the extreme. But it was a source of the greatest pride to have acquired what the one practising it was firmly convinced was English as it is spoken in England.

I have known of an artful person being successful in borrowing half-a-crown from a comparative stranger by blandly asking of him first if he came from Devonshire or Yorkshire, and then pretending to refuse to believe that the other was Irish-born.

It is a great humiliation to some of these eminently genteel people to know that when off their guard they have been heard to lapse into their natural pronunciation. The story is told of one of them whose mortifications on this score were frequent, owing to his convivial ways. On his return from a sojourn on the other side of the Channel, and being asked for his candid opinion regarding the English nation as a whole, he said:

"The people are mostly uppish, but the young chaps like ourselves dhrink very fairly; and I will

say this for them, let them be as dhrunk as you please, they never forget their English accent."

The true Ulsterman is perfectly satisfied with his accent because, whatever it may be, he is unconscious of it; but he never goes anywhere on the face of the globe without taking it with him. I remember when I paid my first visit to Robben Island at the entrance to Table Bay—a place inhabited by convicts, lunatics, lepers, and a lighthouse-man—having succeeded in evading the attentions of the first three sections, only to find myself confronted by the most raucous Antrim accent I had ever heard, I saw a big man in his shirt sleeves, clearing away a score or two of Malays from his doorstep at the lighthouse. The melodious Malays fled before the staccato of Antrim.

"There's no call for ye to try it on me for I'm used till it," said I in the vulgar tongue of the same county, thinking that I would surprise him. But he was too true an Ulsterman to give way to his emotion, as did the parrot in Mr. Southey's poem, who arrived in England knowing only the Spanish language, and after some years dropped down dead when a stranger appeared and addressed a few words to him in Spanish. No, the man gave me the suspicious glance of a true Ulsterman, and only remarked that it was "brave and warm the day"

though it had been "quare and soft a while ago." I agreed with him, and asked him whether he came from Larne or Island Magee. He told me, unemotionally, that he "come" from the latter, and we had an unemotional chat. He had been the lighthouse keeper on Robben Island for fifteen years, and it chanced that I was able to tell him a good deal about some of his own relations, of whom he had not heard for a long time—who had died and who was "married on" whom and so forth; but his voice never broke when he mentioned their names —the Manns, the Dunns, the Duffs—all the old navigators of the four-masted steel ships that came from his native place; and we parted without his asking me to convey his kind regards to anybody.

The true Ulsterman is just like that. He is cautious, he is suspicious, he does not wear his heart upon his sleeve—for the best of all reasons, some people say—he is greatly given to minding his own business and sticking to his job until it is finished. His reputation for thoroughness has gone forth into all the ends of the earth. Touching that very part of the Antrim coast that that lighthouse keeper had come from, a man told me a story. He was with the master of a big Liverpool barque in a colonial port, who had given notice at the shipping office that he was in need of a third mate. Several men

were sent to him on approval, one of them holding a master's certificate; but he was not satisfied with any. At last a man hailed him from the breastwork of the dock,

"I say," he called out, "are you the Cap'n?"

"You're right," replied the master.

"You need a third mate?"

"Yes; have you a ticket?"

"I've no ticket, but I come from Island Magee."

"Why didn't you say so before? Come aboard."

A shipmaster would prefer a man from Island Magee without a certificate than a man from anywhere else who had passed as Captain.

The Ulsterman is thorough, and he is eminently practical. More than thirty years ago, a few enthusiasts in Belfast, anticipating a movement which has made so much progress in some other parts of Ireland as to become embarrassing to visitors, tried to organise a class for the study of Celtic. I had heard from students of the ancient literature that it well repaid the trouble of learning the language, and I worked on behalf of the movement for some time. I soon found, however, that there was no likelihood of my succeeding in interesting the people about me in Celtic literature.

"The sooner Irish is dead and buried the better it will be for Ireland," said one well-known mer-

chant to me. "If you, or anybody else, want to do something practical that will be of real use to us, you will agitate for the study of German. We are not doing half the trade we might for want of a knowledge of German and French and Spanish. There's not a foreign correspondent in any business house in the city who belongs to the place. All the foreign correspondents are Germans drawing big salaries."

That man spoke the practical sound sense of Ulster. But the ears upon which that sound sense fell were attuned to the music of the spheres in those days, and receptive—on the principle of the Marconi receivers—only to such concord of sweet sounds. I was indignant that such a consideration as the creating of a school of foreign correspondents to commonplace linen manufacturers should take the preference of the development of Celtic literature. I was not at all inclined to think of the commercial aspects of the "Voyage of Maeldune," and to appreciate the "Book of the Dun Cow" I considered of far greater importance than the establishment of a creamery in every townland. But since those days, I have learned, I regret to confess, to look at "movements" more from a ledger point of view; and when, three years ago, I was motoring in the County Dublin and found that all the sign-

posts gave directions only in Celtic, which not one out of every thousand motorists who would want to use them, could read, I felt myself longing with all my heart for a few practical Ulstermen to rectify the folly of local enthusiasts. But there are people in Ireland who would insist on all the business houses in the island conducting their correspondence in every direction in Celtic; and as this would entail the employing of a Celtic clerk in every establishment in Ulster, England, Scotland, and the United States of America doing business with Irish houses, the result would certainly be to give a great impetus to the study of Celtic; but whether it would mean a corresponding increase of Irish trade is not quite so apparent.

I had the advantage of hearing a true Ulsterman comment on the sign-post Celtic of the County Dublin.

"There you are," he said; "you've Home Rule in a nutshell. Instead of doing everything in their power to encourage motorists to tour through Ireland, spending money in every direction as they do elsewhere, those fools in Dublin and the South are doing their best to disgust strangers. And the funny part of it is that if you stop your motor at one of these sign-posts, and wait until someone arrives who can translate the directions for you,

you may stay there for the best part of a day. That's Home Rule for you. Ay, and the first act of a Home Rule Parliament would be to have the debates conducted in Irish. That would dish the possible interference of Westminster as well as muzzle the Ulster members. Ireland a Nation! Lord help us!"

But there was another Ulsterman—one of the most distinguished of his time, though he was a Roman Catholic—who did not hesitate to express his views regarding the movement to revive Celtic at the expense of English, as the language of the people of Ireland. When presiding at a meeting of the Irish Literary Society in London, Lord Russell of Killowen, by his emphatic declaration that he considered any movement to discourage the learning of English and the speaking of English in Ireland the height of folly and extremely inimical to the best interests of the people, caused the little band of enthusiasts who had invited him to be their President, to regard him as King Balak did the prophet Balaam, only in the reverse; for they had asked him to bless their movement, and he had cursed it as soundly as if he had been a true blue Ulsterman.

I have often wondered what public opinion would say if the people of Maida Vale and its purlieus

were to insist on the names of the streets and the directions for reaching others were to be painted on the slabs at the corners in Hebrew characters.

But the "Voyage of Maeldune" is undoubtedly a fine poem, and the chance of any Parliamentary proceedings being conducted in Irish is really more remote than that of the business at Westminster being conducted in Welsh.

It was a true Ulsterman who had the bad taste to follow the lead of the judge of a County Court in Wales, and declare that the Welsh nation was one of thieves and liars.

"Even a Welsh rabbit is not a rabbit at all," he affirmed with great seriousness; "ay, and the most of the Welsh mutton that's sold in Wales comes from Canterbury, New Zealand."

CHAPTER VI

THE ULSTERMAN ON HIS GUARD

My experience of the Ulsterman is that there is very little of the hypocrite about him. Every Scotch writer of eminence has had a good deal to say about hypocrisy as a trait of his nation; a reader might actually acquire the impression that hypocrisy was a great national asset of the Scotch; but if this is the case, all that can be said is that in crossing to Ulster they jettisoned no inconsiderable portion of their stock-in-trade. Of course, it may be said that their being planted in Ulster was the greatest act of hypocrisy in the history of our islands; but so far as I can gather, most of the great colonisation schemes of England have been grossly hypocritical. If the more recent ones are not of so pronounced a type, it is only because there have been too many European eyes upon England to allow of her carrying out her beneficent intentions in respect of the heathen in his blindness. The excuses ad-

vanced for the majority of colonisation schemes have a fine flavour of hypocrisy. I have often wondered if good Bishop Heber had not his tongue in his cheek when he wrote his anthem of colonisation:

"From Greenland's icy mountains—
From India's coral strand—
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden strand—
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain."

They call us, and shall we be such wretches as to remain with ears closed to that piteous appeal? Never let such a suggestion be made. The call of the heathen in his blindness—it certainly is in his blindness—is too much for us—

"Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high—
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"

"Never, never, never" is the reply of England, and the result is, that when we have landed some time the blind heathen is blind no longer: we open his eyes for him. As a French critic remarked, when the English colonist lands on the distant shore, he has the Bible and the heathen has the land, but in the course of a year or two a change is effected; the

heathen has the Bible and the Englishman the land.

There are not many historians who are impressed with the altruism of the plans regarding Ulster formulated by that most high and mighty Prince James, or of the later higher and mightier merchant princes of the City of London in 1610. All these potentates had an eye to a good dividend in the future, not altogether of a spiritual character; but no one who has had some experience of the Ulsterman of to-day would say that he is a hypocrite. The result of my very intimate study of him is to convince me that he is just the opposite to a hypocrite: he will give himself a worse character than anyone else would. He makes himself disagreeable to people with whom he is brought in contact, through a curiously morbid reluctance to allow a stranger to believe that he is making himself agreeable with a motive. More than half of the contempt that he has for the Irish of the South and West is due to his belief that they are delightful people only because they hope to gain something by being delightful. When he is assured that you will not attribute so unworthy a motive to himself —and really it would be difficult to say that he ever runs much chance of being so misunderstood—he can be pleasant enough. I have even known of an

Ulsterman being called charming; but this was by someone who had not seen much of him; and I know that if I had told him that someone had found him to be charming, he would have felt indignant, and upon the next occasion of meeting his traducer he would have forced that hasty judgment down his throat.

Whatever an Ulsterman may be, he certainly is never charming, and of this fact no one is more fully aware than the Ulsterman himself. He looks with contempt upon any man who stoops to be charming; and with suspicion upon anyone who he thinks is over-civil. I am pretty sure that many a commercial traveller has failed to do all the business that he might in the province, simply because of his unswerving policy of politeness. I remember very well that in one of the largest drapery establishments, a shopwalker acquired the reputation for over-politeness—it was not a question of his smiling upon ladies or anything of that nature; he was simply said to be far too polite to suit the requirements of the customers; and the business of the shop began to fall off, until he was told that he really must abate in his suavity. It would seem, however, that he was by nature so exceedingly polite that he found it impossible to accommodate himself to the standard the customers expected from

him, and even the constant association with true Ulstermen did not reduce his polish, so he was forced to go elsewhere. I am sure he had no difficulty in finding a new situation where his natural gifts would appeal to a more reasonable *clientèle*. It was explained to me that why people objected to him in Belfast was that he was so affable they bought things that did not quite suit them when he showed them to the right counter and bowed them into a chair.

This explanation seemed to me quite plausible. Most every-day kind of people must have experienced the bewildering effect of being waited on in some of the Louis XVI. tea-shops in London by an exquisite creature with the manners of a Princess (in a fairy tale).

Another instance I must give of the awkward effect of unusual manners in Ulster. The victim this time was a man who, besides being one of the best business men in Belfast, is almost as thoughtful for the comfort of his employés, who must number some hundreds, as was the celebrated Captain Reece, Commander of the *Mantelpiece*. His men have got accustomed to his kindness and are good enough to tolerate it. But when he was building a house for himself in the country, he went out to look after the operations one day, and finding that

two men had been working in a heavy shower of rain, he insisted on lighting a fire and, while their coats were drying, providing them with hot coffee out of a store that he had laid in for himself.

This was all very well, and it would be hard to see that anything he had done so far could offend even the most sensitive person in the building trade. The mistake he made was in waiting on the men himself, asking them if they took milk and sugar and if they preferred Madeira cake to simple pound cake—or would they try a macaroon; for these men did not return to their work at his house. I had the story from the architect; he said that the builder had told him that they wished to be put on to another job, and when pressed for a reason for this, explained that the gentleman had been a deal too polite for their taste, and they were sure that he meant to take it out of them in some other way.

The Ulstermen considered that the risk of working for such a gentleman was too great for them to run!

Anyone unaccustomed to the watchful, suspicious Ulsterman would have difficulty in crediting these stories; but I know that every person who has lived in the province must have had similar experience of this *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* feeling which pervades all classes in most parts of the province.

Of course, so unnatural and apparently unreasonable a trait must have been the result of a long experience of the treachery of gift-bearers; it may be, however, that it has only sprung from a sense of independence. An Ulsterman wants to be paid his price for work done, and he regards anything pressed on him over and above this as eleemosynary, and, consequently, insulting. But looked at from any standpoint, the attitude takes some understanding.

At first, people coming from England to Ulster are absolutely shocked by the uncouthness of the inhabitants. Coming from Scotland, the want of good manners does not strike one so forcibly, unless one has been living in Edinburgh for some time. A man may be in a very good position in Ulster and yet never once have a hat or cap touched to him. Such a token of respect on the part of men in the humblest stations of life or of courtesy on the part of one's equals is practically unknown. One may see in the manufacturing districts the salutation of the workmen to their employer; it is more curt than courteous. It consists of a jerk of the head to one side. If you are a good enough customer to a shop, the salesman passing you in the street will give you the same salute. I remember witnessing a scene in the chief street of Belfast, when a foreign

gentleman begged of a tramway inspector to direct him to a certain side street. The stranger took off his hat with a flourish, making his inquiry, and not only did the official whom he addressed respond with a broad grin, the passers-by roared with laughter and walked on, looking behind them so as to lose nothing of the subsequent acts of this comical person. I heard the comments of two men not previously acquainted with each other, who could not resist exchanging views on a sight so extraordinary as a polite gentleman in the streets of Belfast.

"Who's yon fool-fella anyway?" cried one.

"I never seen the like. He looks as if he had haked it from the asylum," said the second.

They walked on, intensely amused. I never before saw a whole street in Belfast in a smile.

To hear a tramway conductor asking the passengers to sit closer together in order to make room for an extra couple of passengers was an education in provincialism in the old days; probably the electrification of the system brought about an improvement, but if the man had been dealing with cattle in a truck. he could not have been more peremptory.

But the most comical scene that ever came under my notice in illustration of the lack of manners

on the part of a native took place at a town which was the headquarters of one of the old militia regiments. It was after a day's route marching, and the five companies had been dismissed. The adjutant, who chanced to belong to a local family —one of the oldest in the county—had brought before him a prisoner charged by the sergeant with some trifling offence. The officer had not dismounted, and he was saying something nasty to the culprit (alleged), but he hadn't it all his own way, for the man, instead of standing at attention, was repudiating the charge with much gesticulation, contradicting the sergeant with the same vehemence he would have thought necessary to employ in taking his share of a dispute over the price of a cow. The sergeant could not get him to stand at attention, and he never addressed the adjutant as "sir."

It was a scene from a comic opera, with the comic element heightened by the remarks of the onlookers belonging to the town, who had strolled off the roadside into the field.

Of course, if the adjutant had had any backbone he would not have tolerated such a lack of discipline; but, as he explained very good-naturedly to me an hour later, the annual training was to come to an end the next day, and he could not keep the

man away from his home, so he thought it better, on the whole, to let him off with a warning.

Very different was the sense of discipline that prevailed in the militia regiment in the other division of the same county, the adjutant of which was an old Crimean officer, who understood his men, and who was understood by them. This regiment crossed the Channel and, taking part in some autumn manœuvres, created an extremely good impression upon the officers of the General Staff. It was the ex-adjutant who told me that, one day, the Duke of Cambridge visited the camp, and, during some evolutions, was so greatly struck by the fine appearance and good work of this regiment that he sent an A.D.C. to inquire of a sergeant who was doing some pointing duty, what regiment it was.

Up trotted the A.D.C., and called out:

"The Duke wants to know what your regiment is, my man."

"These is the County Down Orangemen, sir," replied the sergeant, standing rigid with his rifle at the "order"; and off galloped the A.D.C. to enlighten the Commander-in-Chief as to the territorial designation of the regiment.

It may be that His Royal Highness did not require to be further enlightened. He may have heard this name given to the regiment when he

was on duty in Ireland in the troublous days of '48. For it was "Prince George" who brought the first news to Dublin Castle of the famous victory of British arms when Smith O'Brien took the field—or the cabbage garden—against them.

In no part of the world where I have ever lived have I found such liberty of speech as people enjoy in most parts of Ulster. If a servant is reproved for a fault, or a supposed fault, he or she refuses to take the blame lying down. An argument usually follows an accusation, and an employer—there are no masters in Ulster any more than elsewhere nowadays—will fight out the question on terms of perfect equality with the employé—that is, when the latter is a Protestant. *Civis Romanus sum*—only you must not translate *Romanus*, "Roman Catholic"—represents the bearing of every Ulsterman, even if he is no higher in the social scale than a labourer on a farm. As a matter of fact, so widely recognised is this spirit of perfect equality, that it is no uncommon thing to hear a farm labourer give the man who pays him his weekly wages a sound scolding for some neglect of duty. I have heard one of the "hands" on a farm of moderate size "have it out" with the farmer for his thoughtlessness in leaving open the door of a byre, and thereby causing a certain amount of

trouble through one of the beasts wandering into the meadow. The farmer was properly repentant, but his accuser was inexorable.

"Oh, ay," he cried, sarcastically, "it's brave and well to be sorry now, but that won't make up for the botheration we've had because you disremembered to shut yon doore."

I fancy it is on account of this spirit that so few indoor male servants are kept in Ulster. It might be thought that, as there is no tax on male servants in any part of Ireland, a much larger number would be employed in every province by people who could afford to do so. A stranger coming to Belfast from England must be surprised to find the door of a mansion standing in its own park of some hundred acres, opened by a maid-servant instead of a footman. It can easily be believed that no inconsiderable proportion of the men who have "got on" in business in Belfast and some of the other manufacturing towns, would feel ill at ease with a man standing behind their chairs at dinner, and perhaps reproving them in less provincial English than they themselves could command. The general feeling is, however, that it shows a tendency to be "uppish" to have a butler, no matter how well one can afford so doubtful a luxury; and the same impression used to prevail in

respect of a late dinner, only not to the same extent. There are, of course, hundreds of families who are born in a *ménage* that is governed by the late dinner; but I have known men whose wills were proved for sums between a quarter of a million and a full million who never had a late dinner served in their houses, unless by way of a regular dinner-party. I have heard, however, that this style of living has changed within recent years—that the new generation of business men are becoming less afraid than their fathers were of being thought "uppish." One man who habitually dined late, and dressed for the ceremony in the old days, occupied a moderate position in a mercantile house in Belfast. I believe that for some years he impressed people by talking about his seven o'clock dinner; but the time came when he was obliged to conform his meal hours with those prevailing in even a more imposing establishment than had ever been at his command; the fact being that he was prosecuted for a series of embezzlements, and was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment.

Just as the practice of clear-starching received a temporary check when the lady who invented it was hanged, so the delinquencies of this gentleman put back the clock of civilisation (as represented by the late dinner) from 7 to 2.30.

To revert to the servant question, it must be said that the communal relations of employer and employed which I have described, only exist when both are Protestants. A Protestant employer would never dream of taking "back talk" from a Romanist. But, for that matter, he would never be put in a position of rejecting it. There are probably nine Catholic indoor servants to every Protestant one, taking Ulster as a whole; and, as a large employer once said to me, "The Catholics know their place." That is why a large number of Protestant families prefer having servants professing the other faith. The early morning attendance at Mass on Sundays does not inconvenience a household, and, moreover, however strongly opposed Protestant mistresses may be to the confessional as a religious tenet, they have a certain secular confidence in it as a deterrent in the case of a servant who might be given to picking and stealing. They do not, of course, regard it as being quite as sound as a guarantee policy from a first-class assurance company, but it is still something of this nature; and I have known of an excellent and orthodox lady gravely saying to her Catholic servant:

"I hope, Marcella, that you are very careful to confess everything to your priest and that you do all he tells you by way of—of—reparation."

"Oh, yes, m'm," said Marcella, with proper meekness: she "knew her place." "I told him about them chops I let burn last week, and he said he was sorry he couldn't make me eat them."

"H'm," remarked the mistress. "I'm not quite sure that—that—but that would be better than nothing."

"Yes, m'm," assented the cook-general.

There can be no doubt that a shrewd Protestant mistress of a house in Ulster is broad-minded enough to recognise the confessional as a protection. It was an earnest Ulster advocate of the doctrine of Justification by Faith who appointed as a trustee in making a certain settlement of his property, his strongest opponent; and when his solicitor expressed his surprise, exclaimed:

"There's no one who believes more firmly than I do in Justification by Faith; but I'm inclined to think that one who holds to that grossly unscriptural doctrine of Justification by Works is likely to make the best trustee in regard to worldly matters."

It will thus be seen that the Ulsterman is not nearly so bigoted as some people would make out.

CHAPTER VII

THE CAUTIOUS HOSPITALITIES OF ULSTER

HOSPITALITY to strangers is the paramount virtue of the most barbarous races, and the Ulsterman regards his province as the most civilised in Ireland. From the standpoint of promiscuous hospitality, I believe that he is right. A visitor to Dublin will receive more invitations in a week than a visitor to Belfast will in a year. The first act of a Dubliner whom you meet is to insist on your dining with him. This is the last act of a Belfast man, and then he does not insist. In Dublin they welcome the coming, in Belfast they speed the parting, guest. They give you the idea in Dublin that they are glad to see you; in Belfast, that they are glad to get rid of you. In Dublin the people are ready to take you on trust; in Belfast you have to justify your presence by your works.

Of course, one living and working in the province as I did can only pronounce an opinion on the subject of its hospitality from observation of its

exercise upon visitors, not upon the frequency of one's own invitations. I should be reluctant to say that, because I had more tokens of hospitality during a month in a colony than I had during ten years in Ulster, the latter was lacking in civility. I was a stranger in one place, and a resident in the other. But, judging from what came under my notice, I have no hesitation in saying that the cautious, not to say suspicious, bearing of the Ulsterman generally prevents him from casting his bread upon the waters when the tide is ebbing, as it were. He sees his way clearly to finding it after many days before he flings a single crust. It is not that he does not believe, to a certain extent, in the possibility of entertaining angels unawares; it is that he is too careful a student of averages not to know that the chances of entertaining demons are very much greater. So he waits. And the man who, in matters of hospitality, waits is not a really hospitable man.

With the Irish hospitality is an impulse; with the Ulsterman it is a consideration.

I do not mean to assert that if a stranger were travelling on foot through an agricultural district, and he wished to take shelter from a heavy shower, the farm-house door would be closed to him. He would certainly be invited to step within, and a chair

would be provided for him. If he did not seem what they call in some parts "a haw-haw sort of chap," he would probably be offered a "farl" of soda-bread, and possibly a cup of the blackest tea he ever drank; and I do not believe that if he made no offer to pay for it, anyone about the place would remind him of his omission. But if the stranger gave no sign of departure when he had drunk his tea, I am sure that he would be made acquainted with those local meteorological signs which promised a cessation of the rain long before he should have time to reach the nearest town, a short cut to which would be pointed out to him. Moreover, if he were to ask the way of a boy on the road, and offer him a coin for showing it, the boy would not refuse it in any part of the North, as he assuredly would in most parts of the South.

Such countryside hospitality as an hour's shelter and bread and salt exists nearly everywhere in the world as it has existed for thousands of years; it is very different in spirit from that which animates a people to entertain strangers who come among them. This exercise of hospitality for hospitality's sake can never be called an Ulster characteristic; and nowhere have I heard a remark made to this effect more forcibly than in Ulster and by Ulster people.

Co. Down Cottage, Girls Embroidering.

But there is one class of stranger who would have a very different story to tell of his reception by even the most exclusive circles in Belfast and Derry —for there are actually exclusive circles in both cities—and this class of stranger is The Officer. All doors are thrown open to the officers of every regiment and of every arm in the Service that may join the garrison. There were two or three families in Belfast—each included some highly marriageable daughters—who were said to charter a steam launch to board at the entrance to the Lough the troopship bringing a new regiment to the barracks, so that they might be the first to leave cards upon the officers. Upon one occasion they were forced to lie-to through a stormy day and night without the trooper being hailed, and on returning to the city they found that the soldiers had come by another route, and in the meantime the regimental plate had become laden with the cards of much less deserving people.

If two or three officers of any rank—the Pay Department not excluded—could only be got to come to any dinner-party or "At Home," its success was considered assured. I remember one family who were especially the envy of all their neighbours on account of their repeated triumphs in the capture of officers. Upon one occasion they gave a

dance, and so numerous were the military in the ballroom that a civilian had no chance of a dance at any time. "Every officer in the province was there except the relieving officers," someone told me, when describing the scene. It so happened, however, that in the course of a year or two, owing to the fluctuations of trade incidental to a business community such as Belfast, the relieving officers ran a good chance of being the most welcome of guests at that particular house.

Another military-loving household represented the third generation of a typical Ulster business family. I had the privilege of a cold acquaintance with all three, and to be so situated was a liberal education in progression from shirt-sleeves to gold lace. The grandfather had started life as a stable-hand, and, like the little boy in a back number of *Punch* who was so very fond of animals that his parents felt there was nothing for it but to make a butcher of him, he acquired such a liking for horses that he became a knacker. For twenty or thirty years his works were the greatest nuisance in one part of the town, and when certain winds were blowing every locality became poignantly aware of the progress of his enterprise. The son of the founder of this olfactory was not quite the rough diamond that his father was; but he was even more enterprising, and made

several highly profitable excursions into the mines of wealth that lay beneath the smells, and there was no nonsense about him. It was not until he had made a large fortune that he ceased to live in a house that was practically encased in the odorous horrors of his "works," and bought a very fine mansion with a nice little park of its own; but in order that he might be in touch with the family tradition, he took care that his new residence should be on the brink of a foreshore of Belfast Lough, and when the tide was out and he sat in the *cottage orné* in his park facing the slobland, he enjoyed many a whiff from its surface which must have reminded him forcibly of his own special reservoir working at high pressure.

The third generation were, of course, perfect ladies and gentlemen. The mansion was a sort of military club within easy drive of the barracks, and the advantages that it offered to all comers, above and including the rank of sub-lieutenant, as a health resort, with an exceptional cellar, were fully appreciated by every branch of the Service.

Now and again the hospitality of the new generation strayed from the well-beaten military road, and then the result was not quite so happy. There was an opera-singer who stayed for some weeks at the mansion with her husband; but some time after-

wards the fact was brought to light that he was not her husband; and there was at another time a charming widow, but it was found a little later that she could not quite claim the full distinction that attaches to widowhood: she was what perhaps one might call a *demi-veuve*. At another time there came three beautiful ladies from Paris whose toilettes made everything that one saw alongside them seem tawdry, but they went away again leaving behind them only the faintest powder-puff of suggestion that the new generation had been the victims of their own generosity as unsuspicious ladies and gentlemen.

Of course, the result of observing these excursions into unknown fields of hospitality was to harden the tendency to caution which, as I have already said, prevails in the most exclusive circles in Ulster.

But in the exercise of hospitality through the medium of strong waters, I am bound to say that Ulster has always been lavish. I have heard that within recent years the barley-water wave which has been sweeping over Great Britain has thrown some of its spray across the Northern Province; but twenty or thirty years ago it seemed as if a perpetual thirst raged from Down to Donegal (inclusive). Everybody seemed anxious to provide someone else with a drink. It was one of the traditions of the

province. It was observed by a writer nearly three hundred years ago, and he took the most reasonable, and certainly the most charitable, view of the practice of drinking usquebaugh in such large quantities, for he assumed that it was impossible to exist in so moist and rheumatic a climate as that of Ulster without taking something fiery to counteract its effects.

Possibly, indeed, the people who drank themselves to death would have perished in the greater torture of rheumatism or tuberculosis within the same space of time; and possibly the new generation, who, as I hear, will let nothing more stimulating than tea pass their lips, may offer a more fruitful pasturage for the insidious germ of many disorders than their forefathers ever did owing to the constant sprayings of whisky to which they treated themselves or with which they were treated by their friends; it will take time to decide such questions as science may suggest in this connection. But, whatever the result may be, the fact has been recorded that the drinking habits of Ulster during the latter half of the nineteenth century were in excess of those of any other part of the United Kingdom, with perhaps the solitary exception of the region of the estuary of the Clyde.

The habit was not confined to any section of the

community. It prevailed among the artisan population to such an extent that few employers could count on more than half of their men coming to their work on Monday morning; the orgy that began on Saturday evening was usually prolonged until Tuesday; and it can easily be believed that there were few steady hands before Wednesday. But it was not for the employers to cast stones at their men, for a good many of them were incapable of counting those who appeared on Monday morning. Some of the most prominent merchants shortened their lives by their devotion to the bottle. Physicians were unable to heal themselves when once the dreadful epidemic got them in its grasp, and solicitors had to pay the bills of costs entailed by their indulgence. Even clergymen were not without blemish in this respect. I remember the names of several who were suspended from their sacred duties in consequence of their continued "unsteadiness." So widespread was the habit that at every public dinner, and a good many private ones as well, in every part of the province, drunken men—quarrelsome, noisy men of the pot-house pattern—were to be found ready to make scenes that were far from edifying.

And the worst of the matter was the way in which drunkenness was treated as a joke. It was regarded

as a sign of good fellowship, and the degrading hospitality of the whisky-bottle was expected to do duty for any higher form of the virtue.

I knew of three business men belonging to Belfast who took a trip to Paris one Exhibition year. They provided themselves with a guide-book and determined to see all the sights. Unhappily, none of them could speak more than one word of French, and this was *boire*. On the morning of their arrival they took a stroll together through the Avenue de l'Opéra, and gazed about them for a couple of hours. Then each looked at the other and laughed.

"What are you thinking about, Jimmy?" asked one.

"I'm thinking that I could do with a wee half-un. But we'll leave it till Bob——; if he doesn't want one, no matter."

They all laughed, for Bob's tastes were well known.

"It seems to me, boys, that Paris is a quare dry place," said Bob. "I can't go on much longer without I moisten my mouth."

They had no difficulty in finding a wine-shop, but when they asked the waiter for "three half-uns of Scotch," their difficulties began. Bottle after bottle was exhibited to them, some beautifully pink, others brilliantly blue, and, of course, the green of the

monastery was not absent from the chromatic scheme. But when they sniffed at the contents they rejected all.

They went into a second place, and a third, with a like result, and the awful apprehension came upon them that there were not "three half-uns of Scotch" in the city. And this was Paris that there was all the talk about! They agreed that it was a greatly overrated place.

At last, when in the act of passing a comparatively small cabaret, one of the trio caught sight of an old friend on the label of a bottle in the window. They rushed into the place, pointed to it frantically, and found that the bottle was not a dummy.

"Saved!" was the only word that they could gasp at that delightful moment. "Saved!"

For a week they remained in Paris, seeing nothing more of the place than was revealed to them between their hotel and the tavern of refuge into which they had run on the first morning.

And one of them told me the story and considered it extremely humorous.

I did not think it necessary to let him know that he could have got whisky almost everywhere in Paris if he had only asked for it. It would appear that they have seven versions of this drink in some parts of France. Between the Place Masséna and

Rue Victor Hugo at Nice, I saw advertised in windows for the benefit of Ulster visitors "Whiskey," "Wiskey," "Whiskie," "Wisky," "Viské," "Whisky," and "Wiscay." There was a splendid range to choose from for anyone uncertain what his taste might be after returning from the neighbouring principality.

The general impression among scientific men is that the drinking habit is largely hereditary. In Ulster, an investigator of this theory would have no lack of data to confirm it. Nothing could be more melancholy than to observe how so many promising lads felt the inherited impulse to be quite irresistible. But on the other hand, I have seen scores of young men grow up to manhood without feeling the least inclination to drink to excess—so they confessed to me—although I knew that their fathers had for years never once gone sober to bed. I also became aware of many instances of one member of a family inheriting the dreadful habit, while his—in one case, unhappily, I should have to write *her*—brothers and sisters were altogether free from it. In one well-known wealthy family of spinners the taint has been maintained, I believe, through four generations, irrespective of sex. Several of the women have been very religious, but it would appear as if religion was no protection to

these unfortunate people. One by one they succumbed. It was heartrending to hear of the disappearance of so many men of brains and women of culture—all into the shadow of that malignant cloud.

But there was an extremely clever youth with whom I was acquainted. He occupied a good position in life. He was quite indifferent to wine and loathed the taste of whisky. He told me that his father had urged him to become a teetotaler, but he himself had come to the conclusion that a man was wanting in self-respect who would so bind himself down by such a vow. His father was a most temperate man, but had told him that his grandfather, who had been in the Indian Army, had drunk himself into his grave, and so it was necessary to take every precaution against the hereditary taint; for dipsomania, like gout, sometimes skips a generation. So his father assured him when urging him to "take the pledge." Still he would not yield. He had made up his mind, he said, and would not be coerced.

One day I was lunching with him, and I noticed that he did not touch even the Barsac.

"I have become a teetotaler," he said with a laugh.

"And you do not feel that you have forfeited your self-respect, after all?" I said.

"No; and I'll tell you why. A week ago, I came across an old man who remembered my grandfather in India, and we began to talk about him. I had never seen him, you know, and somehow I thought it better not to say much about him to people who had known him; but this old chap had been such a pal of his and chatted so freely about him that I could not help saying something mournful—'his worst enemy was himself,' and that sort of rot. The old chap looked at me and asked what I meant. 'Well,' said I, 'of course as you knew him, it's no news to you. But I've often thought that but for that failing of his, he might have lived to win the highest distinction.' 'I don't quite take you, my boy,' said my friend. 'What was his one failing? What, the bottle? Oh, yes, to be sure, he did himself very well—so we all did in those days, bless you, but not a man of us was a penny the worse.' 'Only he went to an early grave,' said I. 'Early grave yourself,' cried the general. 'Your grandfather lived to be eighty-three, and then only died because an elephant trod on him when corralling in Ceylon.' Well, after this I went to my dad and asked him straight out, what was my grandfather's age when he was cut prematurely off. He hummed and hawed for a while, and then I asked him if he would be surprised to hear that he was eighty-three.

'I think he was only eighty-two,' said my dad solemnly. 'But I have great reason to fear that he was not quite sober when he went out that day with the elephants; and I always feared that perhaps you—' 'Here,' said I, 'get me a piece of paper and I'll sign any pledge that you please.' That's how I come to be a teetotaler to-day."

I fancied that I understood the psychology of the transaction, so I had no need to ask him any further questions, or to point out to him how inconsistent it was of him—and so forth. I saw how it is possible for a man to "take the pledge" without forfeiting his self-respect.

Before quitting the unsavoury subject of drinking, I must say that I believe that the scandal which was rife some twenty-four or twenty-five years ago respecting the drinking of spirits of wine in some parts of Ulster, suggests that there is something in the excuse for the great consumption of strong waters in Ulster on the score of the climatic demands. It is difficult to imagine people drinking and liking to drink methylated spirits of wine, unless as a medicine. It was said at the time that the great zest for this drug was due to the rapidity with which one could get intoxicated by it, and then recover from its effects.

But I heard of a man who lived at the historical

town of Carrickfergus and who used to boast that he could "get three crops out of himself"—that was how he put it—in one day simply with whisky. The first "crop" was slept off in time for lunch, the second in time for dinner; and the third dwindled away in the course of a long night.

A great deal of this habitual drinking has, I understand, disappeared from Ulster during the past fifteen or twenty years. And this being so, I feel that I have been writing an unsavoury chapter of ancient history.

But, in conclusion, I should like to point out the evil that is likely to result in the way of a reaction, if some hasty hygienists continue to talk gravely of the "deleterious effects" of the practice of constant tea drinking. Everyone who knows the province in its country districts is aware that the kettle swings on the hooks over the turf fire and the tea-pot rests on the hob. How many cups a day are drunk by the mother and the "childer" it would be difficult to say. The "sup o' tay" is the great stand-by of the Ulster cottage. The "pinch" is put into the tea-pot half-an-hour or so before breakfast, and every cupful that is taken off the leaves in the course of the day is replaced by the same quantity of boiling water. By the time a demand is made upon the pot for the evening meal, perhaps

another "pinch" has been thrown in upon the well-stewed leaves, but there is really no need for such an addition; the right sort of tea is one that is said to "take a quare grip on the second wather," and to allow of the decoction being still nearly black after a reasonable amount of "drawing."

And yet we are told that the contents of the tea-pot become toward the close of the day "deleterious"!

The last time I was in Ireland, a native who evidently had studied the hygiene of the breakfast table to some advantage, explained to me with great vehemence the ruin that was being wrought by this tea-drinking.

"They set the teapot on the hob when they have wet the tea," he affirmed, "and there they let it dhraw for two hours—sometimes three; while everybody that has any sense knows that three-quarters, or at most, an hour is quite long enough for any sort of tay. I'm sick of telling them that three-quarters is just the right time; they never heed me."

I shook my head and said that I was afraid he was a bit of a faddist.

On the same day I had a chance of a conversation on the evils of tea-drinking with a person who was ready to affirm that they had been underrated rather than exaggerated.

He was a publican; but he had an open mind; and when I suggested that even whisky-drinking had got a bad name among a certain section of the public, he agreed with me—and with them.

"But what they should really attack is the selling of stuff that isn't properly matured," said he. "That's what's poisoning the people; and the men that sell it should be prosecuted for manslaughter. Now I made up my mind when I went into the trade that I never would be tempted to sell a glass of whisky of that sort, and I can lay my hand on my heart this day and say that not a drop crosses my counter that isn't three months old."

CHAPTER VIII

NOT A GIDDY PROVINCE

THE humour of Ulster seems to me to be founded upon that of Teniers and Rowlandson. It is robust rather than subtle; it does not need to be thought over in order to be appreciated; you either appreciate it at once or not at all. Its most effective ebullitions would be called acts of cruelty by more fastidious communities. Homer, a syndicate of Greek poets, gave an example of that sense of humour which called for Olympian laughter—a lame god limping across a somewhat capacious hall. It seemed to me, when I was first made acquainted with the vivid account of the scene, that the syndicate had missed a great chance in not making Vulcan sit down on his hat by way of a climax, or on the bowler of Hermes; better still, on the point of a dart left on a couch by Ganymede, with a sly wink at Aphrodite.

Ulster humour is distinctly Homeric—essentially

Olympian in its *genre*, and the laughter that greets its display is such as is described in the rolling Greek hexameters. Ulster humour consists in touching the raw of an old wound with a finger whose tip has been first dipped into a pot of red pepper. It consists in suddenly opening the door of the cupboard in which the family skeleton has been hidden for years, and then disarticulating its bones and passing them round the company with a recommendation that they would make a tasty soup.

Ulster humour is another form of discipline—another form of the rack or the ducking-stool. Keelhauling, once so popular a diversion in the Navy, might have been invented by an Ulsterman. He would certainly have roared on witnessing the face of the half-drowned wretch as he was drawn up the side of one of the noble old three-deckers, with the barnacles that he had rubbed off still adhering to his ears.

It is, in short, a robust growth, and its exercise upon anyone early in life is supposed to have the effect of rendering him unconscious in after-years of any insults that may be offered to him by his most implacable enemy.

I have seen a man turn red, and then deadly pale, beneath the quips of some Ulster humourists, all of whom were his personal friends, and would have

been quite annoyed if anyone had suggested that they were acting in a nasty way toward him.

"Man, dear, don't you know it was all in fun? Can't you take a joke? Who would have fancied that a man like you that has knocked about a bit would be so thin-skinned?"

These were the explanations which I heard offered to another man who had been the objective of some little sallies, also from a party of personal friends. I saw the tears come to his eyes at one of the jests; but it was not until some time afterwards that his friends noticed that he was disconcerted. They could not understand for the life of them why he did not take in good part their light banter about what was so obviously a subject for banter, as the fact of his having been married for three years without having become a father.

On the whole, I think that Ulster humour can best be compared to the banderilla—the explosive dart that is flung at the bull, piercing the hide, and having a very comical effect—upon the onlookers—when the animal tries to shake it off. No one who is only as thin-skinned as a bull should come into an arena when the darts of Ulster humourists are flying about. Only a rhinoceros or a hippopotamus is fitted by nature for such a game.

Of course, in a mixed company, the fact of one

man being a Roman Catholic affords an opportunity for unlimited fun at his expense. But in such a case it must be understood by everyone that the man will take the fun in good part; and he is welcome to retaliate, if he can, by a "dunch" at the Protestantism of the others, or even at that exponent of the faith, the Orange drum. The baiting of a Catholic in this way, on the whole, promotes a certain feeling of friendliness, and I have seen the majority quite enjoy the retaliation—if given in the right spirit; but I am inclined to believe that the briefer one of these friendly banterings is, the better chance it has of being a success.

More than once I have heard these little chaffing matches conducted in the friendliest spirit and winding up without the slightest acrimony. I have heard Roman Catholics tell stories against themselves and their priests, though certainly never to the same extent as I have heard some of the most distinguished Jews in England repeat little anecdotes reflecting upon the most notorious characteristics of their race; but I have never known of Ulster Presbyterians touching upon their own little weaknesses as so many of the same creed do in Scotland.

In the case of an interchange of "rag," when only one or two Catholics may be present, I should men-

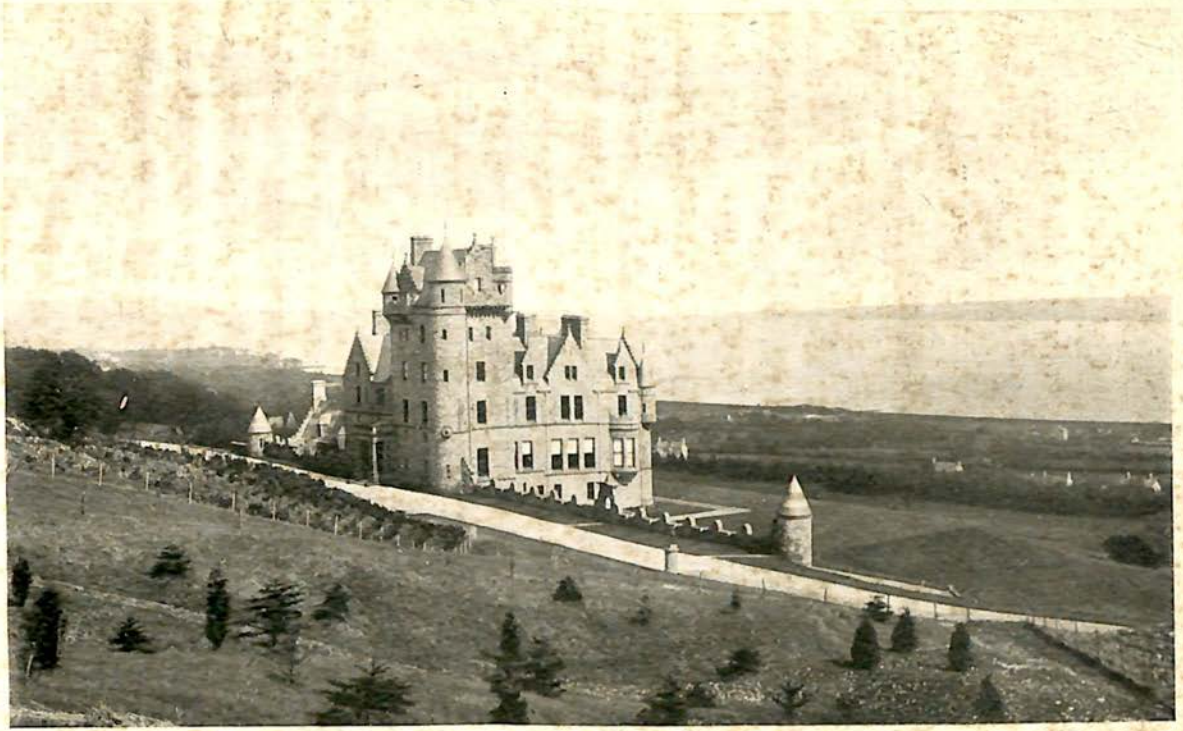
tion that the attack has invariably come from the Protestants. I have never yet heard a Catholic begin the fun by a thrust at Protestant worship. The shadow of the ascendancy of a bygone age seems still to hang over the Catholics. It is still taken for granted that one may have a sly dig at them without there being much danger that the retort will be insulting.

Certainly there was no danger of any reply being made to a sally made by a middle-aged Protestant shipowner when he was watching one of his fleet being warped into the dock after a record run from San Francisco. The master was a Catholic, and he raised his hand in a seaman's salute when he recognised his owner standing on the breastwork of the bay of the dock-gates.

"That's a brave wee run you've made, Cap'n!" cried the owner.

"Ay, sir; might easy ha' been worse," said the captain, modestly.

"Man, but you must have sprinkled the quare lot o' holy water over her to get up the speed on her like that," cried the owner; and there was, of course, a roar of laughter from the little crowd on the quayside. But I could see that the captain did not like that style of commendation. He had saved his owner probably a couple of hundred pounds by his



Belfast Castle, Cave Hill, and Lough.

navigation, and, as he thought of some of the rough nights off the Horn, he may have felt that he deserved a more appreciative word of praise.

He could not, of course, make a reply; but I am pretty sure that when he got safe within his nice little house at Whitehead he was not wanting in words with which to define the character of his owner.

The same gentleman, whose name was Tom Johnston, was not quite so fortunate in regard to his audience upon a similar occasion, when another of his fleet had just hauled alongside. He turned to an elderly broker who had been doing some business aboard another ship, and said:

"I'm just thinking, Davy, if old James Beck could rise from his grave and you told him that that ship was owned by Tommy Johnston, what would he say?"

(Old James Beck had been a shipowner of the previous generation when Mr. Johnston was a dock-runner.)

"What would he say, Tommy?" said the elderly broker.

"Ay, what would he say if you told him that it was me owned her and three others as good?"

"Oh, that's easy enough answered: he'd say that you stole them," was the reply in the unemotional staccato of the Belfast man.

Upon this occasion it was the shipowner who turned red, for he knew that the story would go the round of the brokers' offices and the coal merchants' offices and the marine-store dealers before the night.

And his judgment on this point was not astray.

I can hardly give a better illustration than this of the character of Ulster humour. It is something more than mordant; mordant is simply biting; but it is plain that the humour which suggests that a man is a thief goes beyond the biting; it is engulfing.

If a man has a joint in his harness, it is at this the arrows of the Ulster humourist are aimed. If a man has been thrown over by a girl, he would do well to refrain from going near any place where he is likely to meet some frolicsome friends. Should he do so, he is sure to be greeted by some inquiries as to the exact date of the wedding, or with a request for an invitation to the wedding breakfast, or at least for a bit of bride's cake. If a man is married to a wife who is suspected of having a temper of her own, he may be asked—if there is a large enough audience present to make the witticism worth producing—if she has given him a black eye yet, or if the rumpling of his hair is due to her having tried to comb it for him with a "creepy" stool.

I remember being in a room in a club in Belfast when a dispute was going on as to the number of wives a certain member had had up to the latest date. One man suggested four, another could only recall three. Just when he was trying to remember what was the name of the second, the man himself entered the room. It might be imagined that an awkward silence followed; but there was nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the disputants welcomed the timely arrival of the man who should certainly be in the best position to pronounce an unbiassed opinion on the subject of their argument.

"Look here, Wilson, you're the very man we want," cried one of the group. "We were talking about you and your wives. Will you tell us once for all how many times you've been married?"

"To be sure," said Mr. Wilson. "Ay, I've been married three times."

"Ha, didn't I tell you that he had had no more than three?" cried the one who had held out that that was the exact number.

"Hold on a while," said the other disputant. "I'm saying there was a fourth. Ay, you married old Craig's daughter. Then there was the widow of Tom Pinkerton, and your present one was that daughter of Sam Glasgow that was engaged for two years to Tom Hurst."

"You've got them on your fingers' ends," said the much-married man.

"Ay; but wasn't there a daughter of Harry Foster that had the grocery in North Street?" said the other.

"By Jingo, you're right," said the husband after some moments of thought. "Lord! What a memory you have! To be sure I married wee Bella Foster. A pleasant enough wee thing, so she was! But she only lived for a year, and I got into the way of not counting her. I don't think it quite fair to count her with the rest. I hadn't rightly begun my marrying when I had her."

"I see. She was something like a miss in baulk to commence with."

Everybody, not even excepting the husband under discussion, roared with laughter at this excellent definition of the exact position occupied by the deceased lady in the matrimonial billiards of the one who appeared to understand the game.

In Dublin it would, as a matter of course, be taken for granted that any reference to a deceased wife, even though she was only an insignificant unit in the marking board of the game, would be in bad taste, and would be avoided at least in the presence of the bereaved but not quite disconsolate husband; though if the topic of his matrimonial adventures

had been touched upon in his absence some witty things would most certainly have been said. That is the difference between Ulster humour and Irish humour. In Ulster a witty thing is accounted to be thrown away unless it is something that should make a man—or a woman—feel uncomfortable, and is uttered in their presence, with plenty of people around to watch his—or her—squirms. It is thought rather underhand to make any stinging allusion to a person unless that person is present—an excellent social code, it must be confessed, if everyone is acquainted with its operations; but one which may now and again be embarrassing to a stranger to the usage.

I have suggested that the Ulsterman is inclined to have his suspicions respecting strangers; this is so true that when, by the intervention of some more potent characteristic still, a man forgets himself so greatly as to form a hasty intimacy which does not turn out well, he has a very uncomfortable time among his usual associates. I remember very well how a man who, as a rule, was most discreet, met a good-looking stranger aboard a cross-channel steamer. In the course of their chat, the stranger casually mentioned the fact of his being a major in the corps of Royal Engineers, and that he was going to Belfast to make a confidential report to

the War Office respecting the defences of the Lough.

Now, no matter how cautious a Belfast man may be, he may always be trusted to succumb to anyone with a military title; so when this stranger talked about hotels, the other gave him a most cordial invitation to stay in his house for the week or two he should be in the city. Of course the stranger feared that he could not accept such hospitality. He felt sure that he would be greatly in the way—his duties would prevent him from being otherwise than erratic, and so forth; but on the other assuring him that his house was a sort of Liberty Hall, and that he would not be made a stranger of, but could go and come just as he pleased, he gave in, but still protesting that he knew he should be a nuisance.

Well, the major drove up to his house with him and was presented to his family, and then, after making arrangements for a dinner party at the end of the week—the major only stipulating that no military man was to be present, the fact being that his mission was a confidential one—he might almost say a secret one—the visitor was brought to his club and introduced with all the *éclat* that attaches to the designation of major and is reflected upon the sponsor of anyone bearing that title of authority.

The major was as affable to all as if he had merely

been an ordinary person working for his living. He joined some of the afternoon card parties, and bore his early losses like a sportsman. Of course, luck could not always be against so good a fellow, but when it turned, he bore his winnings with indifference, always being ready for doubles or quits, and invariably profiting by his daring.

And then, on the day after the dinner party which was given in his honour, he received a telegram from the War Office—he showed it to his host—directing him to pay the hundred pounds demanded for the option of a certain bit of ground where he had recommended the building of some shore defence.

"But the beggars haven't sent the money to me for the purpose—isn't that like the War Office?" said the major. "Red tape—red tape—all red tape! And if I were to pay it out of my own pocket I should probably get it reimbursed at the end of six months, if not a whole year. What should I do—you're a business man and you can tell me? I must pay in gold, you know, no cheque. If I paid by cheque I should never get a penny back—more of their red tape!"

"It's very simple," said the good business man. "Wire to them to telegraph you the money to the General Post Office here—that's the way to manage it."

"Good Lord! and I never thought of that! What a fool you must think me," cried the major.

He got a telegraph form and filled it in, addressing it to the Director-General Ordnance Department—and showed it to the good business man, inquiring if he thought that would do, and having received his sanction, the major took it to the telegraph office with his own hands.

The reply came from the office of the Director-General within an hour.

"*Sir Henry gone Woolwich two days. Gave instructions before leaving that you were to wire that you have paid option to-day.*"

The major showed it to his host.

"Isn't that sort of thing heart-breaking? The Director-General has gone on his Woolwich Inspection and has left instructions—of course the money cannot be wired to me unless he signs the authority."

"I'll lend you the money until it comes to you," said his host. "Psha! what a fuss to make over a hundred pounds!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort, my dear fellow," said the major. "What have you to do with a thing like this? No, I'll get out of it some way. I keep my own banking account with Coutts. I'll wire them."

"How will they know that the wire comes from you? They won't do anything without a proper verification," said the good business man. "But I'll tell you what may be you would let me do. Make out a cheque in my name and I will get you gold for it. I promise you I won't run away before I have handed it over to you."

He kept his promise. He did not run away. It was the major who did.

He got the hundred pounds, collected his card winnings, borrowed a fur coat from a member of the club, and has never been heard of since.

Of course, his cheque on Messrs. Coutts was returned with some rubber stamp hieroglyphics on it beneath the words "no account."

And for years afterwards the unfortunate victim of this transaction was known as "the Major." Quite a long time had passed before his intimates at the club ceased asking him when he entered any room where a few of the members were congregated:

"Say, could you oblige me with gold for a cheque?" or "Any news from the War Office?" or something equally poignant and to the point.

I tell this story because I think it embodies an unique incident in my experience—an Ulsterman

being taken in to the extent of a hundred pounds by a stranger.

My memory accommodates me with several instances trending in exactly the opposite direction. One is highly illustrative of the subject of this chapter—the humour of Ulster.

The humourist in this case was a speculative builder who had enriched one of the suburbs of Belfast with some of the most perfect examples of a style of architecture known as the rubicund Jerry; and though only a middle-aged man, he had survived many of his own creations. Once he confided in a friend, who had previously financed him, that he needed some ready money, and was prepared to sell eighteen houses in a row which he had just finished, at a low figure, and was ready to give him the refusal of the lot. The financier inspected the houses and at once saw that they were a bargain. He knocked off fifty pounds as a matter of form, of course, and paid over the money, getting the title-deeds.

It was really not until a whole week had passed and the vendor was not available for an explanation, that the purchaser of the block discovered that, instead of containing the eighteen houses that he had paid for, it consisted of sixteen only. He counted the houses very carefully one by one—houses are not like a flock of sheep that leisurely

pass by, and get so mixed that one is liable to make a mistake in counting them; but, on the other hand, if a man buys a flock of sheep he counts them as a matter of course; but what purchaser of house property ever takes the trouble to see that all the houses are there?

Since that occurrence, however, I believe that, even if a man buys a single house in Belfast, he counts it before paying for it.

Another humourist of the same character was a shipowner in a small way. He had bought a few quasi-derelicts, and put them into the timber trade between Ireland and Miramichi or Pensacola. It was understood in the old days that any sort of vessel that would float, and a good many that required a deal of persuasion to do so, could earn money for a shrewd owner in the timber trade; it really is practically impossible to sink a vessel that is laden to the decks with deal planks. I have seen such a craft towed up Belfast Lough with very little of the bulwarks to spare above the water-line. And when the enterprising owner of these lumber rafts got enough money together, he bought a large four-masted ship that was A 1 at Lloyds, and so had no difficulty getting her insured, no matter in what direction she might sail.

But upon one occasion he had a cargo for her to

a port on the Western Coast of South America—Valparaiso, I think it was—and, of course, he got a policy for a reasonable amount on the vessel—not any suspiciously large amount, however, and off she sailed. During the next month she was spoken three or four times in the South Atlantic, and then came silence. After eighty days the owner seemed to have become a little anxious about her. So apparently had the underwriters, for when he suggested putting another £2,000 on her, they told him they would have to charge him 15 per cent. for it. He paid the money, after protesting that it was too high a rate, considering the ship that she was. At the end of another ten days he rather thought that he should put another £1,000 on her, and he did so, at a 20 guineas per cent. rate. After the lapse of a hundred and twenty days he made another application to the insurance people, but the best terms they could offer him were ninety guineas. The shipowner was indignant. He protested that he knew his ship and believed that she was quite safe. He had often heard of vessels being blown far into the Pacific and taking more than a hundred and thirty days to reach Valparaiso; but the agent for the underwriters shook his head; the vessel would be in the "missing" list the next day, he declared; but this was too much for the owner, and

he said in his haste that he believed so strongly in his ship that if the underwriters refused to underwrite him he would underwrite them, and take over their risk on a twenty per cent. basis.

At first the agent assumed that he was merely talking out of the depths of his chagrin at not being able to reinsure; but the man became so vehement in his expressions of confidence in the vessel that the agent asked him if he was really serious in his offer.

"I never was more serious in my life," he replied. "I'm not the sort of man that's afraid to back his own belief, and I'll do all that I said."

"Twenty per cent.?" asked the agent.

"Well, say, twenty-five," replied the owner.

The result of half-a-dozen wires was that the underwriters expressed themselves willing to accept the offer, relieving them of their responsibility for the amount for which the craft was covered, for an immediate payment of a fourth of the sum. The agent told the man, when he signed the agreement, that he was a fool; but the man was pigheaded, and bragged about the sailing qualities of the ship and the excellent seamanship of her commander.

The next day the ship was posted as "missing," and a day later she arrived at her destination, and her owner lodged in his bank a cheque for £4,000!

I had a chat with the master of that vessel—he had started business as a ship-chandler on his return from that profitable voyage—and he told me how he had been blown right out into the Pacific, and then his chronometer had been allowed to run down, so that altogether his experience had been an extraordinary one; but he assured me that his owner was, contrary to the prevailing opinion in Belfast, a perfect gentleman.

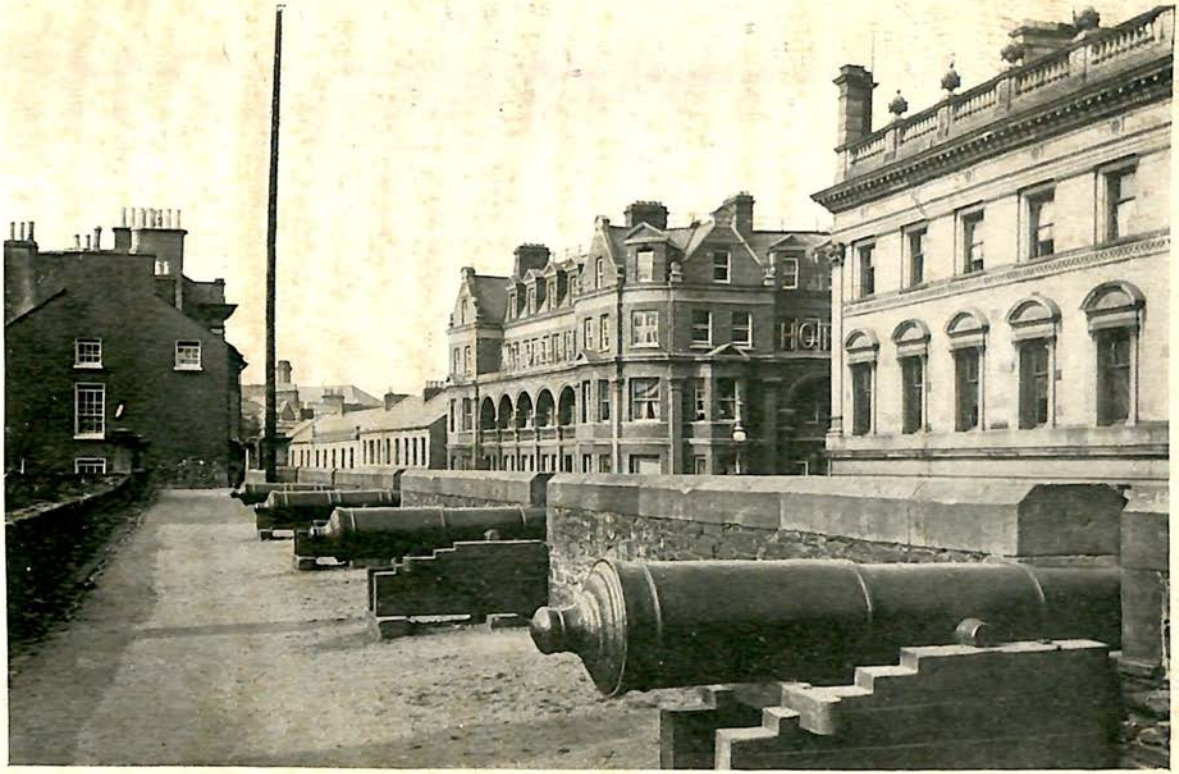
And then I laughed, and he responded with his tongue in his cheek and one eyelid drooping.

It is a particularly Ulster form of humour by which a man can clear £4,000, less the usual expenses—say, £500 to the master and £200 divided between the mates.

Scarcely so successful in his essays in mercantile humour of an Ulster type was the owner of sundry coasting craft in a far back period. In his merry way he used to laugh at those owners who sent their vessels to sea in a "well-found" condition.

"Anchors, if you please, and a boat swinging in the davits," he said. "It's no wonder that your vessels make long trips, when every time there's a breeze of wind the skipper can run for a harbour and let go his ground gear, and wait till the weather moderates."

His vessels made quick voyages—for a time; and



Derry Walls.

he made money. But after a while there was no part of the coast where the wreckage of his dreadful trade was not being washed up with the bodies of those wretches who had gone forth, having nothing to depend on, in sailing round the coast, but a compass and a Jefferson's Almanac.

I heard on the best authority that it was the hearing of the practices of this man that caused Samuel Plimsoll to start his crusade against such floating coffins. And within the first six months of the operation of his Act of Parliament, the Belfast shipowner was arrested and sentenced, with his son, to imprisonment for eighteen months.

Another example of Ulster humour I remember very well. A young woman of strong Nationalist tendencies, produced a book which she said had been greatly needed for a long time—a perfectly impartial History of Ireland. It dealt, at considerable length, with the stirring incidents in Ulster in the seventeenth century, only not a sentence did it contain regarding the heroic defence of Derry. That incident, which most historians regard with some interest, and to which Macaulay has devoted a picturesque chapter of many pages, was thought too pronounced by the author to have any claim to be included in a perfectly impartial history.

The Police Court of any city naturally furnishes

many examples of the characteristic humour—of the Bench. As a rule, however genial a person may be in his own circle, when he finds himself a prisoner in the dock he is rarely heard to much advantage. It is to the Bar or to the Bench that one must look for something neatly epigrammatical. It seems to me that England is very much more fortunate—if that is the right word—than Ireland in this respect. There is hardly a case that is tried by certain judges or magistrates at the Law Courts or the London Police Courts, in the course of which some witticism of quite a finished character may not be heard. But, for several years past, the Irish judges have been as sober as—well, as a judge; and, so far as Ulster is concerned, the fact that the inanities of a Police Court attorney named John Rea used to be quoted as examples of humour long ago, should be enough to indicate how destitute of anything approaching brilliancy were the Police Courts at Belfast. It would be very unlike Ulster if people spent their time uttering quips instead of getting on with their business.

Occasionally, however, a policeman is unwittingly witty, and sometimes a pompous magistrate causes laughter (immediately suppressed).

One of this type was presiding at the Belfast Police Court, when a solicitor, who had absolutely

no case, but who was doing his best to make his client believe that he was earning his half guinea, began to cross-examine the policeman who had "effected" his arrest.

"You say you saw the prisoner throwing a stone?" he asked. "Now will you swear that there was no one with him at the time?"

"I saw no one, sir," replied the policeman.

"Do you mean to tell the Court, sir, that there wasn't a man named Donovan between you and the prisoner?"

"I didn't see anyone, sir."

"You didn't see Donovan? And what about Demetrius—did you see anyone named Demetrius there?"

"No, sir."

"And Hannibal—are you prepared to swear that Hannibal wasn't present?"

"I saw no one."

"What about Pliny or Caius Julius or the mother of the Gracchi—did you see none of them? Mind, you are on your oath, my man—now answer me?"

There was some tittering in the Court, and the policeman, having a suspicion that he was being "ragged," remained silent.

"Come, sir," said the pompous magistrate, in accents of rebuke; "answer the question that you

are asked; were any of these parties in or about the place when you arrested the prisoner?"

"Not to my knowledge, your worship. Leastways, I didn't see them," replied the man.

"One more question I'll ask," said the attorney. "Will you deny that you were the member of the Force that arrested Caligula?"

There was some laughter.

"Silence!" cried the magistrate. "This is no laughing matter. I mean to get to the bottom of it. Constable, did you or did you not arrest—what was the name you suggested?"—he looked down at the attorney.

"Caligula, sir. It is important to the prisoner that these facts should be brought out."

But at this point the magistrate's clerk came into the Court, and his assistant, who had been there all the time, whispered something to him, and he in turn whispered something to the magistrate, who immediately turned a fierce eye upon the learned counsel.

"This has gone far enough," he said. "I won't have the time of the Court wasted."

Anyone who hangs about a North of Ireland Court of Law in the hope of studying character or having a laugh at a display of local humour will certainly be disappointed. The humours of Ulster

are not seen to greatest advantage in such an entourage. But upon one occasion I chanced to be present in the Belfast Police Court when a fine specimen of a stalwart Ulster man was charged with making use of party expressions. He had gone into a locality that was distinctly Romanist, and had there, loud and long, cursed the Pope and all his connections. The result might have been very serious had not a couple of policemen hurried him off the scene.

The sentence of the Court was forty shillings or a month.

"Forty shillings?" said the man. "Why, it was worth double the money! It's a thing I haven't done for twelve years. I've been doing well for myself in Australia; and I just had a fancy to curse the Pope for the sake of old times."

He had fifty sovereigns in his pocket when arrested.

CHAPTER IX

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

In dealing with the characteristics of the Ulsterman, as I found him, I have done my best to do as I conceive any writer should, in attempting to describe a people in the midst of whom he has lived —and this is to touch upon the racial traits of the multitude rather than upon the idiosyncrasies of the individual. Such illustrations as my memory prompts me to give of Ulster characteristics suggest racial tendencies; but I should be sorry to make an attempt to convey the idea that what I have described one Ulsterman as doing, all Ulstermen would do under like conditions. I have referred to the tricks of a Belfast shipowner, but I trust that the inference of my readers will not therefore be that Belfast shipowners have need to be carefully looked after. I have given examples of strong sectarianism, but I could give many quite uninteresting examples of men doing good turns to others who were

bitterly opposed to them politically. But, as everyone who has had some experience of the Province will admit, the latter would not be at all characteristic of the average Ulsterman, though quite in keeping with the generosity of many individuals to be found in a great and greatly mixed community. Ulster is made up of the "all-sorts" that go to the composition of any people. The man of the finest manners of the nineteenth century was an Ulsterman, the late Marquis of Dufferin and Ava; and yet I have not hesitated to suggest that fine manners are not invariably to be found in Ulster, and can anyone who knows Ulster say that they are?

But when one meets day after day with persons possessing the same characteristics, one is justified in generalising in respect of the community at large, and I have endeavoured to give my experience of Ulster generally, and to record such incidents as I consider typical of life in those parts of the Province that are meant when allusion is made to Ulster—those parts that were colonised by Englishmen and Scotsmen in the early part of the seventeenth century, and whose descendants are in occupation to-day. Of Irish Ulster I know little or nothing. It is Ireland, and though I have some knowledge of Southern and Western Ireland, and have written more books than I care to remember from an Irish

scenario, yet I have, I repeat, but a scanty acquaintance with those parts of Ireland that are situated in Ulster. The colonists like these queer neighbours and would not have them injured in any way—particularly by Home Rule; but Ulster's liking for the Irish in Ulster is just about the same as the liking of the people of Christchurch, New Zealand, for the Maoris. The Maoris are a handsome and picturesque people, the colonists of New Zealand will tell you; they have many virtues and innumerable superstitions; they have been very badly treated in the past, and they knew so little how to protect themselves, that elaborate provision had to be made to enable them to live in the land which was once their own.

That is what you hear in the New Zealand colonies about the Maoris, and you hear practically the same in the older Plantation of Ulster respecting the native Irish of Donegal. The colonists will protect them from all who would try to encompass their ruin through that potent agency of evil, Home Rule.

> "The children born of thee are fire and sword,
> Red ruin and the breaking up of laws,"

cried Mr. Gladstone, respecting the Home Rule movement in 1882, a few months after he had, at the London Mansion House, also quoting from the

same poet, proclaimed the arrest of Mr. Parnell and his confederates,

"Our enemies have fallen! they have fallen!"

And as the Ulster colonists echoed his first words at that time in the hearing of the native Irish of their glens, so they hope to be able to proclaim in their ears the pæan, and so all will be well—in time. These things take time.

The native Irish have succeeded to a marvellous extent in preserving the original pronunciation of the English language as they heard it in the sixteenth century. There can be no manner of doubt that what is now termed "the Irish brogue" in the pronunciation of English, is the pronunciation of the language as it was in the days of Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare; and in spite of the constant changes which have been taking place during the past three hundred years, they have been faithful to the language as it was originally heard by them. Scores of examples could be given of their devotion to the original, not merely as regards the pronunciation of the vowels, but in the actual form of the words and in their meaning. It is really only when read with the Irish "brogue" that Shakespeare's puns can be appreciated. The language has been grossly corrupted within the past three hundred

years, so far as England is concerned, so that the only perfect form is that spoken by Irishmen with a "brogue." Now, the Ulster colonists came both from England and Scotland, but only a few words and forms of speech have they preserved of the language that was spoken by the English; the Scottish words and phrases and idioms have asserted themselves with some modifications, and the result is a curious, raucous dialect, some words actually coming from the old Norse settlers on the coasts of the extreme North of Scotland. But the chief Scottish influence that is very nearly as active today as it was three hundred years ago in Ulster, is to be found in the discipline to which the children are subjected.

In my young days in Ulster, it was almost universal for sons to address their fathers as "Sir," and their mothers as "Ma'am." Of course, one will find in many directions still in England, sons maintaining this old show of respect in regard to their fathers, but who ever heard of a young woman in England saying "Ma'am" to anyone lower in rank than a Royal Highness? In Ulster, I believe this form of address is dying out; but in my young days it was quite usual. The discipline to which the sons of a family of the middle class were, and still are, subjected in nearly every part of the colony is a survival

of the vigilance of the Scot and his tendency to interpret too literally the Proverbs of Solomon; for however spoiled a child may become, it is certainly not by the sparing of the rod. What is nowadays dignified by the name of corporal punishment—under such a designation it figures almost daily in the newspapers, with a schoolmaster as defendant—was, perhaps still is, of frequent occurrence—in Ulster, during an interview between a father and a son of, perhaps, eighteen or nineteen years of age. In fact I do not know that there was any age limit in these transactions—there certainly was no Statute of Limitations in respect of any offence. That is to say, if it were committed in January and not discovered until June, it had to be expiated in the usual way just as if the perpetrator had been taken *in flagrante delicto*. In Ulster, a "whaling" was not so much of a punishment as a religious ceremony. It was, in Presbyterian families, "opened with prayer" and closed with the Doxology. It was the making of a good many liars and hypocrites; for so long as a son remained under the household roof, he was expected to give an account of himself for every hour of the day, and it was a very slack son who failed to do so, after a little practice. There was no such thing as a latch-key in the old days. A boy of from eighteen to twenty was per-

mitted to go to a party only when the religious standing of the family issuing the invitation had been inquired into and the purity of their motives made plain. And if the son failed to return to his own home at a reasonable hour—say, ten o'clock, his father waited up for him, and so did his mother. It was *de rigueur* that neither of them should do anything while so engaged: they sat with their hands folded, waiting.

I have known of boys of seventeen being flogged by their fathers for being a quarter of an hour late in returning from what was no greater orgy than a neighbourly tea.

But it was only after the gravest consideration and an exhaustive discussion that permission was given to a son to "go out to tea," as it was called. Upon ordinary evenings, if the son was permitted to go out alone, he had to give an account of himself on his return, and it would not do for him to mention casually one place that he had visited; he had to account for every five minutes of his absence. I have known of this being so when the son was over twenty, and with a perfectly clean record.

The same inquisition took place in regard to the reading of the members of a family. Useful books were prescribed—not necessarily dull, for there is no reason why there should not be a certain amount

of chastened cheerfulness even in books having a religious tendency; but only books of a high moral tone or a strongly-marked religious tendency were supposed to be admitted under a respectable roof. There was an excellent writer under the initials A.L.O.E.—her full name I found out was "A Lady Of England"—and anything that came from her pen was as freely admitted as if it had been by the author of that classic "The Schönberg-Cotta Family." Another that was passed was called "Ministering Children," with its sequel, "The Ministry of Life." The circulation that these volumes had in Presbyterian Ulster must have been enormous. If it had not been for them the semi-bookseller in Belfast would not have been able to subsist, even with the adventitious aid of his wire croquet hoops and five ounce mallets which were sold at the back of his shop.

But more robust fare was naturally placed in the hands of the studious sons. The lightest and the brightest of this type was "Self Help." Two of the sons of the great author of this masterpiece were in business in Belfast, and when I went to live in London, my house was only half-a-dozen doors away from his residence. The old gentleman was as straight as his books at the age of eighty.

Only one real novel remained off the list of the

Puritanical *Index Expurgatorius*, this was "John Halifax, Gentleman."

The books that were being read by all the members of the family were duly scrutinised by the parents from hour to hour, and, if possible, the after-tea reading took place in a common room, and the girls were encouraged to do some sort of work while reading, so that their time might not be altogether wasted; for it was, of course, assumed that every moment spent over a book was wasted.

This was the ordinary discipline that prevailed in thousands of middle-class families throughout Ulster; and I do not suppose it differed so greatly from that which was the custom in Southern Scotland at the same drab period. It tended to culture; the culture of mendacity and hypocrisy, and I have often felt that these two were its progenitors. The fathers who looked so carefully after their sons in those days required some looking after themselves occasionally. The Ulster stories having a direct bearing upon this point are innumerable, but even if they should bear repeating, I would not repeat them.

In all country houses in England, and in many town houses as well, even in this careless age, the day is begun with prayers—except, of course, on hunting mornings, when there is no time to lose;

but there is no unctuous element introduced into this domestic service. In Ulster, as in Scotland, the getting down of "the Books," the exposition of the Sacred Word, and the long extempore prayers, in Nonconformist households, took up the best part of an hour at the best part of the day—of course that was the best part of the day, the young men were told, when they grumbled about having work to attend to at their offices.

"They do it because they believe they would have no luck at all the day they omitted it," the son of devout parents explained to me.

I am pretty sure that he was right; for there is plenty of superstition to be found in Protestant Ulster as well as in Papist Ireland. I would not, however, go so far as to agree with another of my contemporaries who affirmed that those long Bible readings and prayers were blackmail paid to Providence for looking after our temporal interests. We all scoffed in those days, except those of us who, for the sake of peace and pence, became hypocrites, and found it to pay. As I have already mentioned, novels were shut out from us—even the stirring, healthy romances of W. H. G. Kingston and R. M. Ballantyne were prohibited; but there was not a boy's bed that did not hold between the mattress and its foundation a copy of "The White Chief," "The

Scalp Hunters," or "The Rifle Rangers." The girls of the family were even greater readers of the fascinating forbidden; but they found the bed of the horse-hair sofa cylinders the most convenient places of concealment for their treasured volumes; and many a tattered "Jane Eyre" or "Wuthering Heights" was hastily slid out of sight at the sound of a footstep on the lobby.

Of course, girls had much greater opportunities of reading than boys; and from the days of Eve they have always been amateurs in the surreptitious. That was how they read Bulwer Lytton and Hawley Smart and W. P. R. James, while we were getting rid of our Mayne Reid infatuation and were hurrying into the "Charles O'Malley" series which preceded our Dickens and Thackeray investigations. Both Mayne Reid and Charles Lever lived in our Ulster. So also did Sheridan Knowles, whose "Hunchback" was once as popular on the "legitimate" stage, though we read it illegitimately, as its great rival in the tinsel and tawdry sentiment of the period, "The Lady of Lyons."

To be sure, there were occasional discoveries made by our parents of forbidden books. The horse-hair, cylindrical pillows were constantly sliding about and so revealing the treasures they were supposed to hide, and fathers in Ulster never

hesitated to make a drawer to drawer search in a son's room for whatever might be hidden away there. I actually knew of one father who had a peep-hole made in an artful place in the partition-wall of his son's room so that he might spy upon him at all hours. He was a religious man, and that was how he hoped to keep his boy walking in the straight path of virtue. The son had his suspicions of something like this, however, for he found that one lie which he told his father had been seen through, and this could only have been done by spying or clairvoyance; and after some search he discovered the peep-hole, though it was hidden on the outside by the wall paper. So that night he lit his gas and listened for the approaching carpet slippers of his parent. When he heard the little whisper of the wall paper being moved outside, he blew a good pinch of Cayenne pepper into his father's eye.

He affected the greatest concern when he ran out of his room on hearing the yell that followed, and all the household rushed to the lobby. He knew that his father dared not tell how his accident had happened, and he pretended to be greatly grieved when his father, through his yells of agony, proclaimed him a young ruffian.

"And me never out of my room till I heard him cry out," he explained in sorrowing tones to his

mother. He retired mournfully to his room, stuffed a cork into his side of the hole, and heard no further accusation in regard to the transaction.

But after spying came lying, in ordinary cases of forbidden books being found. The girls were as ready as the boys to disclaim the ownership of the volumes, and the mystery of their existence in the house frequently remained unfathomed; for few of the parents went to the length that the father of a companion of my own did when he found a copy of "The Headless Horseman" in his son's hands. He broke the spine of the book and put each half in turn upon the fire, and then caned the reader. That was how I do not possess a copy of that classic to-day, for it was I who lent the boy the book.

Another Ulster father found in his son's hands a novel that promised to be really bad. He glanced at the first page or two, and then said,

"I'll look into this. I'm not going to be so unjust as to cane you before I see how bad the book is; it may not be unfit for you to read. I have never heard of it."

The son, who knew exactly how fascinating the book was, trembled. He thought that, on the whole, he would rather his father condemned him without evidence. But his father, unfortunately, was a fair man, and confiscated the volume. He began to sample it after tea, and he was still at it at mid-

night, as the boy could see from the light shining through his study window.

In the morning he looked heavy-eyed. He called his son to him and said,

"I found time to glance at a few pages of that book, and anything more shocking I never came across. If ever I catch another book of that sort in this house, I'll burn it and cane you. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the dutiful and highly-elated boy.

He took very good care that his father never did find another book by the same author in his hands; but the following week he found another hidden away in a corner of his father's business room.

I think that the Ulster fathers began to relax some of their discipline in regard to books, and that is possibly why there is even a smaller circulation of books than ever in the Province.

But in other elements of discipline I believe that the Ulster Scot is as much of the Scot as ever. He still makes his grown-up sons account to him for all their movements. No matter how great a smoker he may be himself, he will not allow his sons to smoke if they remain under his roof. No matter how many "half-uns" he may indulge in during the day, he would look on it as a crime if he knew of one of his sons letting whisky pass his lips. I

have often wondered if he credited the excuses made by them for being reasonably suspected by him of one of these offences. Did he really believe that Willie's clothes had such a smell of tobacco because he had travelled from Lisburn in a smoking carriage? Did he actually believe that Jimmy's toothache had been so bad as to compel him reluctantly to take the advice of a chap in his office and stuff the tooth with cotton wool dipped in whisky?

I am not sure if the playing of billiards is still regarded as heinous in Ulster. But I know that twenty-five years ago it was alluded to in many pulpits as a shocking thing, which, if pursued, could only end in perdition; and upon several occasions the suggestion that a billiard table should form part of the furniture of some of the Parish Clubs was at once vetoed. But by an inconsistency only to be looked for, considering the character of the Committees of Management of such institutions, bagatelle, which is far more a game of chance than billiards, was pronounced healthy.

I remember being in the billiard room of a Belfast Club and seeing a very promising young player —he was a man of twenty-five or twenty-six—put off his stroke by the entrance of his father, a large mill-owner in a country town, who strode across the room and caught his son angrily by the arm.

Bleach Green, Glenmore, Lisburn.
The Largest in the World.

"So this is the devil's playground where you waste your time!" he said in no modulated tones. "Put that stick away and come along with me, you and your billiards! If ever I catch you here again, it'll be worse for you."

And the young man meekly put his cue away in the rack—he retained sufficient presence of mind not to put it away in its own japanned tin case with his initials painted on it—and walked off with his father's hand still on his arm, for all the world like a prisoner newly arrested but giving his captor no trouble whatsoever.

That was Ulster discipline with a vengeance.

My friend Shan Bullock, who knows far more than I do about the way of life in the agricultural districts of Ulster, and whose novels are perfect pieces of *genre*, told me some years ago when we were discussing the relative position of father and son in the Province, that when he visited his father in one of the North-west counties, long after he himself had become a husband, he felt afraid to ask his father to bring him from the little town to which the latter was driving, a four-ounce tin of tobacco. He did not know what would happen if his father found out that he smoked.

I have often wondered if it was the training in duplicity, due to this system of discipline, that has

made the Ulsterman the good business man that he is to-day. It is idle to deny that success in business has always been governed by the same elements as success in advertising, or success in military generalship, or in international diplomacy. In fact, there is scarcely any walk in life in which success is not dependent upon such lessons as sons are obliged to learn if they wish to remain on good terms with their fathers.

There is an Ulster saying—it is current only in the humblest circles—"Them that can beat their father can beat me." This means, of course, that when a man is able to get the better of his father, his training for life may be considered finished; and it must be admitted that from his earliest years a boy living in Ulster must do his best to circumvent the vigilance of his father. In business you have to circumvent your rivals in the same trade if you do not wish to be sent to the wall; and when you have done that, you have to make assertions in an advertisement which will hardly bear to be examined through a microscope, and this is trying to circumvent the public.

Of course, the whole art of Generalship consists not only in trying to find out what some one is doing at the other side of a hill, but also in endeavouring to make him believe that you are not on your side of the hill. A successful general is per-

petually swearing an *alibi;* and the story does not say that the barrister, who got his client off, by means of an *alibi*, the weakness of which was commented on to him by the judge afterwards, and who replied, "I thought it a very bad *alibi* myself, my lord, but I give you my word that it was the best out of the five that the prisoner gave me to choose from," was debarred on account of this transaction.

Business is business, and Jacob, the schemer from his birth—nay, before it—has been held up to the admiration of the world by a very high authority indeed as a business man. He was the man of the Ulster saying who was able to get the better of his father, and—after a hard tussle—of his father-in-law into the bargain.

The discipline to which the typical Ulster son is subjected by his father is hard; but it is equivalent to a salutary training for the life which he is to live, and if he does not get on by the aid of the lessons which it teaches him, he had better get off—to the United States, where he may become President, as Mr. McKinley of County Antrim did. The greater Presidency—that of Tammany—is reserved for the Irishmen who "boss" it, so that it may remain from generation to generation for the Ulsterman to point to as an example of the form of Home Rule which is the ideal of the Irishman.

CHAPTER X

RELIGION AND HYSTERIA

I AM sure that I have written enough respecting the characteristic traits of the true Ulsterman as they appeared to me, to make it understood that he is a very religious man. The most successful colonies of the modern world have been founded on religion. The Spanish colonisation of America, starting with the first expedition of Columbus, was a religious movement, and it was carried on in the true religious spirit of the day, thousands of the healthy natives being slaughtered, all to the glory of God. The Plymouth Rock people emigrated for conscience' sake They fled from the intolerance of their persecutors at home, and forthwith developed a spirit of intolerance far in excess of that of their enemies. Intolerance in religion simply means a deeply-rooted conviction of being absolutely right while everyone else is wrong; and it is really difficult to

see how one can be truly religious without being intolerant. The Church at Laodicea was an example of the judgment meted out to the tolerant even in those early days of the religion of the sword. Toleration was the only attitude that was regarded by the highest Censor as intolerable, and with such a lesson before them, while it is impossible to believe that the Calvinists who formed the bulk of the original colonists of Ulster were such monsters of intoleration as Calvin, it is safe to assume that they could see no need for any sect but Calvinists to be allowed to exist; and we may be sure that this belief was strengthened by the religious lukewarmness which they found among the Episcopal clergy in Ulster. The bishops were so very ready to accommodate themselves to the scruples of such as were ever standing on the threshold of Nonconformity, that they did not hesitate to ordain men who could not see their way to subscribe to some of those dogmas the whole of which had, according to law, to be accepted by a man before he could be licensed to preach.

It was Bacon who urged upon the mighty Prince James to take over Ulster for the benefit of civilisation and true religion. The plausible lawyer assured the King that the story of Orpheus charming by his sweet music the wildest of animals, to say nothing

of the rocks and the forests, might easily be realised if the monarch would "join the harp of David in casting out the evil spirit of superstition with the harp of Orpheus in casting out desolation and barbarism."

The notion of sending harps to Ireland was quaint enough; but instead of harps there came harpies to the country, in the form of self-seeking parsons from England and the nominees of the great corporations of London. They all came in the name of civilisation and religion; and they achieved both, the true Ulsterman of to-day will tell you; and perhaps he is speaking the truth. They kept on coming. Early in the eighteenth century one witty observer wrote complaining that so many exemplary clergymen left England for Ireland, but unfortunately they were held up on the way by scoundrels who stole their clothes and landed in Ireland impersonating them, but carrying on their own ungodly practices in that island. But so far as Ulster is concerned, it may be said that if religion did not come to Ulster, religions did; and though there have been many examples of Religion being strangled by religions, yet in the course of time, and after a massacre or two, the preachers of several doctrines, all of them antagonistic to the Church of Rome, who took refuge in the new colony, succeeded in gathering

together large congregations and in impregnating the moist and receptive atmosphere with a spirit of worship that has remained hovering over the land ever since.

That was the link which bound Ulster to Scotland. It is recorded on good authority that, for years after the Scotch Covenanters had taken refuge in Antrim and Down, their brethren who had farms in Galloway were accustomed to make up Sabbath parties of excursionists, who crossed the Moyle in order to attend one of their churches where a favourite pastor was preaching; and after listening to his discourse, recrossed to Stranraer the same evening. I have frequently made the same voyage myself, though not for the same purpose. We reckoned it no feat to cross that narrow channel, and to watch the Galloway hills, already seen to be green by anyone looking out from Donaghadee or Ballywalter, become clearer and brighter with every hour's sailing, until the beautiful undulations of the shores of Lough Ryan were on each side of us, and we could run our boat comfortably into a natural harbour with a sandy ground to drop our anchor into. And when we hailed one of the fishermen outside his own cottage, we found him and his people speaking exactly the same dialect as was spoken on the Irish coast which we had left a few

hours before; for the Scotch of the County Down coast from Bangor to Portaferry, is the Scotch of the coast of Galloway. Often have I pictured the silent Sabbath crossing of those stern Lowlanders nearly three hundred years before, in their little half-decked fishing boat with its broad beam and one big square sail, every man of them with his Bible on his knee; and then the return trip—you may be sure it was not silent. I could hear the banging of the brown ploughman's fists upon the hide-bound and brass-clasped books and the rolling voices that complained that the old pastor had not been fierce enough in his denunciation of the feeble souls who had shrunk from some of the "election" dogmas of Calvin, or in praise of his righteous vehemence in dwelling upon the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, prepared since the foundation of the world for the devil and his angels and all the "unsealed," as well as for the Irish adherents of her of Babylon! How they would gloat over her designation by the Divine, whose nature seemed to have changed so greatly in Patmos from the time when he had reclined at the table with his head on the breast of his Master, and who had heard the words of pity and understanding come from the Master's lips when he said to the one of the same designation, "Neither do I condemn thee."

Calvinism as a creed in its entirety is dying out in Ulster, I believe; but the spirit of Calvinism is still in the air to be breathed in by the people—the spirit of the Calvinists and of the Covenanters of Scotland; and now that it has been put to the test, the effect of its inspiration has astonished a good many people!

Regarding the spirit of ascendancy a good deal might be written, and has been written, by people after those events have taken place which suggested some comment. Wisdom comes to a good many critics after the event. An ascendancy, religious or otherwise, is as natural in the growth of a people as is the ascendancy of the fruit in an orchard—the fruit over the leaves. In Ireland generally, during the past hundred years, the ascendancy of wealth, education, and industry has been with the Protestants; and the ascendancy of imagination, of art, and of humour has been on the side of the Romanists. And that differentiation is the one that prevails to-day in the island.

Which set of qualities contributes most to the making of a nation is a question that will be decided in divers ways by divers persons. To the industrious man of business the sparkling life of Dublin cannot but seem foolish, and he will complain bitterly of the ascendancy that is due to such unim-

portant qualities as graceful manners, a happy tact in conversation that avoids every topic except a pleasant one, a devotion to art and letters, and promiscuous hospitality. On the other hand, to the Dublin man, who wants to talk to intelligent people in a tastefully-furnished house, on the latest play, the latest opera, or the earliest picture, the conversation in a raucous accent on the subject of the Town Clerk's salary, the prospect of a newly-opened shop doing well, or the possibility of a rise in the price of coal, owing to the recent strike, will make no appeal. Such a person should not take up his residence in Belfast—or, indeed, in any part of Ulster.

Dublin is the easiest city in the world for anyone to live in who has written a book or a play or a song. Everyone whom he meets has read his book or, what is quite as pleasant to him, pretends to have read it, but, in either case, is ready to talk pleasantly about it; everyone is just dying to see the play; and as for the song—the happy composer might easily dine out for a whole year if he only promised to sing it in the drawing-room every night. I have known a very small musician who did it. And a man may remain famous in Dublin on the slenderest of grounds for several years.

This is where the ascendancy of intellect is recog-

nised, and in the Protestant society of the capital it is as fully recognised when it is on the side of the Catholics as when it appears, as it sometimes does, in the brains of a Protestant.

To talk in these days of the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland is ridiculous. There are two ascendancies in Ireland, the one of money and industry in the North, the other of art and grace in the South.

Of course, religion has a good deal to do with both. Protestantism is the religion of large dividends in Ireland. Even in Dublin the Chamber of Commerce has always been strongly opposed to Home Rule. Various attempts have been made in the Roman Catholic parts to establish industries that would give employment to thousands of the population, but they failed; and anyone who reads the report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the reasons for failure will see that the obligations of the religion of the majority were at the bottom of it. When a proprietor has to knock off one per cent. for every saint's day in the week, one can easily understand that prayers and profits can never go hand in hand.

In one case I recollect the speculator called a meeting and inquired of the people from whom he hoped to get his "hands" how much they earned

in a week. The answer was 7*s.* 6*d.* "Come to me," he said, "and you shall have 15*s.*"

For days and weeks this marvellous fortune that had come to the community was talked about. Fifteen shillings every week! The thing was too good to be true. The man had engaged within a few hours all the people whom it was possible for him to employ, and the factory opened merrily; but before it had been running for many weeks there was a most inconvenient shortage of hands; not half his people put in an appearance one day, and two days later the same thing happened. The man was a Protestant, and he could not understand what this irregularity meant. The people evaded his questions at first, but at last some of them plucked up courage and said:

"What's the good of 15*s.* a week to us, sir, when all we need to live on is just half the money?"

He was a stranger, so he tried to show them how beneficial was the virtue of prudence. Why should they not put the useless 7*s.* 6*d.* into a savings bank to accumulate for their old age? It was no use; it was unnatural to save up money like a miser, they said; and it was not until he had determined to close down the factory that he found out that it was the occurrence of the numerous saints' days in the Romish calendar—days on which all good Catholics

attend chapel and do no manner of work—that caused the shortage of hands every week.

He went to the priest of the parish and laid the matter before him.

"God forbid, sir, that I should take the side of anyone or anything that would keep my people from the right discharge of the duties of their religion," said the priest; and the gentleman went to his factory, locked the door, and took the next train to Belfast.

When I was in the south of Ireland some years ago, a friend of mine was employing a number of men making some extensive alterations in his park, and diverting the course of the stream so as to make it available for driving a dynamo for electric light.

His experience was the same as that of the capitalist who started the factory. Twice or three times every week the men would take the boat and row across the lake to attend Mass at the chapel—all except one old fellow, who took a more reasonable view of the transaction.

"'Deed, and it's right you are this day, sir," he said, when we were talking over the disappearance of the workmen just at a critical moment. "Religion's all very well in its way, I say, but it's nothing to go to the devil entirely with."

In the calendar of the Protestant operative in

Ulster there is only one saint's day, and that is the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne.

That is why I do not hesitate to say that Protestantism is the religion of big dividends.

Like so many of the early colonies, Ulster soon became the place of refuge of many of the people who were persecuted elsewhere for conscience' sake. It was a matter of conscience with a good many Governments to carry on a persecution in the name of religion. Unlike the Pilgrim Fathers who fled from persecution only to practise it themselves and better the bitter instruction they had received, the Ulster colonists seem to have welcomed all Protestants. They increased exceedingly. It was in 1610 that James started the plantation, and yet the Protestants who were reported as massacred in 1641 numbered 154,000. Of course, this was a gross exaggeration. Not more than 20,000 succumbed to the barbarities of the rebels; but the fact that the first report was widely believed for a long time shows what the numerical strength of the colonists must have been within thirty years.

Several Huguenot families came to Ulster both from England and France, and were welcomed by the pioneers of the linen-weaving industry, who were fully appreciative of their skill and taste. I have met with many of their descendants in the County

WARINGSTOWN: AN ULSTER VILLAGE OF HAND-LOOM WEAVERS.

Down and County Antrim; and they are still to be found as far north as Derry. Then the Society of Friends contributed to the number of England's persecuted who sought refuge in Ulster, and they fared much better in the Irish colony than they did on the other side of the Atlantic. For over two hundred years the names of members of this gentle people have been in prominence in connection with Ulster industries; and it cannot be doubted that, though they never assumed the *rôle* of active missioners of their faith, the example of their own lives had its effect upon the community, even if they never quite succeeded in convincing their neighbours that the ploughshare was nobler than the sword. In the counties of Down and Armagh the Friends must have been numbered by the thousand. Their meeting-houses were to be found in almost every town. A mile or two from the prosperous town of Newtownards there may still be seen, just off the road-side, their little burial-ground, and the simple head-stones bear the names of some families who have contributed greatly to the prosperity of the County Down.

I recollect in my young days visiting the houses of three or four of the Quakers who lived near Lisburn, and were engaged in the manufacture of damask. The quality of the things these people

produced has never been surpassed in any country. I have seen tablecloths and napkins in perfect condition after eighty years' constant wear. I need scarcely say, however, that they had never been "laundried" except at home. It is beyond the skill of man to weave any fabric that will withstand the operations either of a circular saw or a modern hygienic laundry.

I am afraid that the gentle grey of the costumes of the ladies did not make so powerful an appeal to me in those days as it would now; but I remember distinctly how the folding of the hands and the silent grace of all the Friends at the dinner-table impressed me, though I could make nothing of their "thees" and "thines."

I knew that it was unusual for people generally to say, "Would thee like some more apple-pie?" and I wondered if it was really grammar; however, I took the apple-pie (there are no apple-pies in these days).

I have heard that the Society of Friends is diminishing in numbers in Ulster as it is elsewhere. Such a falling off was only to be expected. The world has become too strenuous for these gentle people, and a Dreadnought costs £2,000,000. The world has no use for Quakers or for table-linen that will last a hundred years.

The Unitarians have for a long time been a power

in some parts of Ulster, whither they flocked when suffering from the obloquy of other creeds. I am not sure that they were greatly welcomed by the orthodox Presbyterians or Methodists. I know that in some directions they were regarded by other Protestants as in even a more parlous state than the Catholics. There were many families who would never allow their children to mix with the children of Unitarians, lest the tenets of this creed might be contagious. Moreover, it was generally understood that Unitarians were intellectual, and intellectuality was believed to be a great snare to anyone possessing it, since its tendency was inimical to faith. I think it must be admitted that the charge of intellectuality brought against the Unitarians of Ulster was amply sustained. In education, in art, in science, and general culture, as well as in business acumen, the adherents of this faith, or of this negation of faith, have for a long time been foremost in Belfast, at any rate. Since early in last century the house of Marcus Ward occupied a place at the head of all in the kingdom for artistic printing, and for many years their revival of the art of illuminated writing, in which Ireland excelled long before the coming of the English vandals, was recognised in every part of the world. The Corporation of the City of London were among their best patrons.

The Wards were one of the earliest Unitarian families to settle in Ulster. Mr. Vere Foster, the eminent educationist, and still more eminent philanthropist, was also an adherent to this creed.

Methodism has always flourished in the North since John Wesley made his preaching tours in Ireland, and nearly lost his life in the South. I believe that until recently the appeal made to the emotions of their hearers by the ministers of this Church was considered the most important part of their service in many parts of Ulster; and I fancy that that remarkable religious phenomenon known as the Great Revival of some fifty years ago was due in some measure to the fervency of the Methodists.

No volume, however desultory, that purports to touch upon life in Ulster during the second half of the last century can ignore this extraordinary movement. Considering the stolidity of the people in the midst of whom it broke out, I think that it has never been paralleled in the history of Great Britain. There have, of course, been strange religious outbursts in various communities from time to time, but nearly all have been the direct result of the preaching of one man, and nearly all have taken place among a highly emotional people and at times of great national excitement. But the Ulster Revival started in an obscure village in County Antrim—I

think it was either Broughshane or Cullybackey—and within a fortnight it had swept over three or four counties with the rapidity of an epidemic, until there was scarcely a town or a village that was not affected by it.

I think I am correct in saying that it started at a Methodist preaching; but it was soon far beyond the scope of any Methodism; and to anyone interested in the phenomena of panic, it afforded an unique opportunity for observing their operation and development and their eventual disappearance. Many years earlier the wonderful camp meetings of the American negroes had turned out red-hot howling converts by the score and put the fear of "de debbil" if not of God before the rolling eyes of Cæsar and Pompey and Juno and Dinah and the rest; but everyone knows how simple a matter it is to make even the third or fourth generation of these jungle-dwellers "go Fantee." I have seen them "go Fantee" after a "hearty" prayer meeting in the island of Barbados. But here was a small crowd of stolid Antrim folk—highly respectable and quite religious, probably never missing a service of their church or an attendance at Sunday-school—here were these people, old and young, flung about as with a form of epilepsy, shrieking out for salvation in an ecstasy of apprehension; and at the last

becoming amenable to the decencies of civilised life by the delivery of a few phrases in a fervent but sympathetic tone by a man as unacquainted with theology as with the literature of hysteria!

This was something quite beyond ordinary experience, though, of course, not beyond certain incidents recorded in sacred writings or certain prophecies of incidents to take place before "the great and terrible Day of the Lord."

It was these prophecies that the amateur exponents of the mysteries took hold upon, believing that because some mill operatives in villages whose names only appeared on large-scale maps were flopping about the floor of a barn, the end of the world could not be long delayed, if there was anything in sacred prophecy at all. So it was that when there was a local inundation in some part of Asia Minor some thousands of years ago, the report got abroad that the whole world was submerged, and has obtained some credence ever since. I was a child of tender years when the Revival was running its course; but I heard a great deal about it, belonging, as I did, to an intensely religious household, and having the interpretation of Scriptural prophecy inculcated upon me before I was able to read. For years the Revival was, in some parts of Ulster, the topic that swallowed up all other topics, as Aaron's

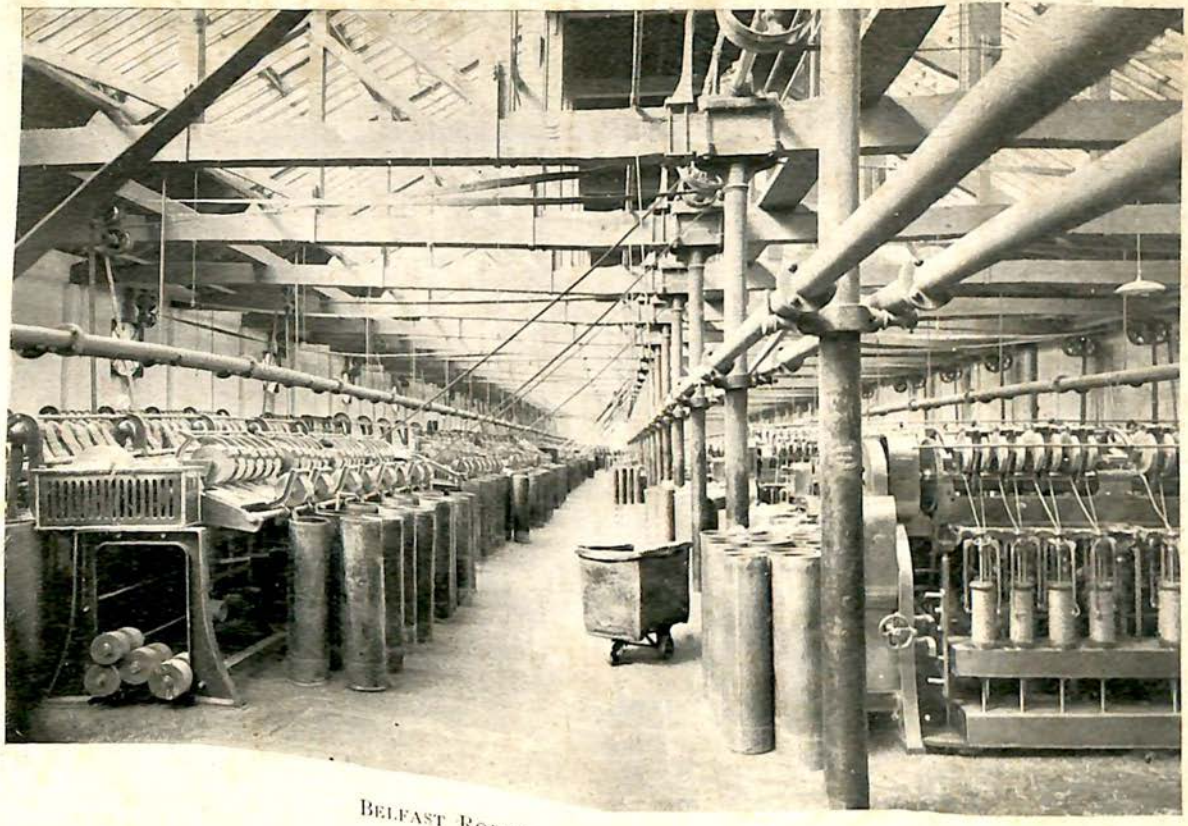
rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians in the presence of Pharaoh; and if no one else did really believe that the end of the world was at hand, I certainly did. I have never believed in any coming event with the same fervency since.

I recollect distinctly hearing of those gatherings at which, during a prayer by a layman—probably a hand-loom weaver—a girl would fall down with a shriek and a cry for mercy. Those who had already been "converted," some of them not more than a few days earlier, would gather round her and tell her that all she had to do was to believe—that was their vague watchword—"believe, believe, believe." They did not suggest what or in whom, only believe. And then the conditions of safety were made more easy still: "Only say you believe"—that was the magic phrase which they poured into the ears of the one affected. She was, I knew, caught by the arm by zealous counsellors and pinched into a confession of faith. They listened, insisting on her saying that she believed, and at last someone caught her whisper. "She has said it—she has said it—glory be to God. Amen! Amen! Amen!" And then a lurid hymn was sung by way of a pæan, and the next morning the awful mystery of the stigmata was revealed upon the fleshy parts of the girl's neck and arms, just as it was in mediæval times in similar

cases of religious epilepsy, when there was a good deal of pinching and squeezing going on.

But before the hysterical hymn had given place to a feverish prayer, there was certain to be another shriek for mercy—another and another—the barn resounded with shrieks—men, women, boys, and girls were grovelling and writhing on the floor, and the men who were pointing out a way to "find peace" were even more noisy than the people who were affected. Wherever peace might be found, it certainly was not in the barn or the schoolhouse which was the scene of these manifestations.

An old and devout man employed in the great rope-works, who was a firm believer in the Divine origin of the Revival, described in my hearing, fifteen years later, many of the scenes that he had witnessed, and the effect that his descriptions had upon me was to convince me that, under certain conditions, even the most stolid community will yield to those subtle influences which had full play during the Saturnalia of the Romans, in the Fantee orgies of the West Coast of Africa, or on a Mafeking night in the heart of civilisation. I could not but respect the sincerity of my informant—he was a man of average intelligence, and had always been a good-living and religious person; and he talked of the "conversions" of those



BELFAST ROPEWORKS—THE MANILLA ROOM.

wonderful times with deep feeling according to his lights.

When I inquired of him particularly respecting the reports which I had heard touching upon the immorality that rumour had associated with the good work described by him, he shook his head and said that Satan had been at work as well as God. In fact, he expressed in the plainest language his certainty that the Arch-enemy had felt that if he did not do something in his own way, "very speedy," he would have no further opportunity, for all the saints would be "gathered in," and the next scene in the terrific drama of the two Powers of the Apocalypse would be the overthrow of the devil and all his works. In short, the Revival was the devil's last chance.

I did not suggest that his explanation was not quite satisfying or even plausible. That there was immorality in the villages and in the towns in connection with the movement could hardly be denied. There are many people who believe that they can trace through those religious emblems which have been in use from the earliest ages a connection that suggests that the very human of the old days was looked on as the very divine, and that religious emotion is only another form of a more material ecstasy. However this may be, it is certain that

the persons who remained under the influence of the spiritual refining of the Revival were to be numbered by the hundred, if not by the thousand. Young men and women who had been leading the ordinary careless life of their class became devout, and were ready at a moment's notice to teach others "the way of salvation." They abandoned all the frivolities in which they had been accustomed to indulge, and became austere. Many of them talked to me in an earnest way within five or six years of what they called their "conversion," and though I was very young, yet I distinctly remember that what impressed me most in their conversation was the absolute certainty that they were saved and that I was not—in fact, that very few people besides themselves were. Their attitude was not in the least affected by my telling them that I believed all that they told me it was necessary for me to believe; I was assured that nothing that I felt mattered in the least; it was not a question of feeling, but of faith. Then followed a network of sacred texts, spun round me pretty much as that which was forged in Vulcan's stithy when he was anxious to cite Mars as co-respondent upon evidence that could not be refuted; and I had nothing more to say. A little later, however, I had a good deal to say to one of their number who approached

me in the same spirit of assumption and presumption. I remember very well that his name was Jerry Meneely—it has the ring of eighteenth-century comedy about it in my ears now; but it had not when I was fifteen years of age. I had been brought to hear this person preach, and his preaching was the religious equivalent of a dancing dervish. He worked himself up to such a point that he seemed to be an oratorical catherine-wheel spluttering out a torrent of words full of fire and fury, but signifying nothing. He whirled for about half an hour in the wildest way; but the motive force of the Revival movement was not in his whirlings. No one shrieked out, no one grovelled. It was a disappointed man who in private, a quarter of an hour after the meeting, attacked a fair-haired boy for not having "found peace." But the boy was excessively cheeky, and even insolent, in his bearing, going so far as to give Mr. Jerry Meneely a two-minute parody of his platform style, and to advise him to learn English instead of the argot of County Antrim before he posed as a preacher before educated people. It was possibly the consequences of the man's complaint to my father of my treatment of him that impressed the whole incident upon my memory.

But for some years after the falling of the lighted match, so to speak, at Broughshane, the general con-

flagration throughout the Province was apparent. The blazing torch was passed from hand to hand. We had converted prize-fighters—the heroic contest between Sayers and Heenan was still being talked about in secular circles—converted publicans, converted thieves, and a converted sweep, who had become whiter than snow. There was even a converted clergyman, who alluded to his clerical brethren as "white-necked devils." But the one who brandished the torch most wildly was a man named Richard Weaver. He was the missioner who placed evangelisation on a sound commercial basis by compiling a hymn-book, and the purchase of this hymn-book was supposed to carry with it, in a higher sphere, the privileges of the auctioneer's catalogue to the building where the furniture is on view. It was understood that if you bought one of these hymn-books you had at least some claim to be classed among the sheep and not among the goats. As the price was only a few pence, it can easily be believed that multitudes behaved like sheep in following one another to buy it. He must have sold some millions in those fat years. A copy came into my hands quite recently, and I do not really think that it contained greater doggerel than may be found in other collections of hymns for general use. And the "tunes" were invariably pleasant, cheery lilts.

I heard enough of them in my young days, when they were sung to the accompaniment of boots being blackened and knives and forks being cleaned on the emery-board, to say nothing of the bars of the grates being blackleaded and the doorstep being "freestoned." There was not a servant-girl or a boot-and-knife boy that could not lilt or whistle a thing called "Happy Day."

Richard Weaver was a breezy preacher, and his Happy Day lasted a good while. It was a great pity that his failure to provide for the maintenance of some accidental children who were assigned to him by a Bench of Magistrates, caused some of the purple patches in his career to be brought into the glare of publicity, and his happy day came to a close so far as active evangelisation was concerned.

CHAPTER XI

PREACHERS I HAVE KNOWN

An evangelist of a very different stamp from this Richard Weaver was the Rev. Henry Grattan Guinness. A man of culture and refinement, with the most musical voice that could be imagined, and a magnificent presence, he possessed all the qualities that go to the making of a great preacher. His earnestness and his sympathy were sufficient of themselves to hold the attention of the largest audience. His mannerisms of delivery never degenerated into affectations, but some of them were quite dramatically effective, though no one would suggest that he ever made a conscious attempt in this direction. In private life he was delightful. Unlike most of the notable "unattached" preachers who made our house their headquarters, he never attempted to "earn his keep" by quoting texts to the children. As it so happened, the children were far more textually accurate than their accusers.

Mr. Guinness was invariably gentle, courteous, and sympathetic. I was able to listen to an hour's sermon from him without flinching before I was twelve years of age. He did not profess to belong to any denomination; and I am pretty sure that, like all great preachers, he excluded all questions of dogma from his discourse.

No man ever preached to larger congregations in Belfast. When he went to the Ulster Hall in Belfast, the great building was invariably packed to its utmost capacity; and I have seen High Street and Castle Place lined with people streaming down to the Custom House where he was announced to preach at half-past seven o'clock on one summer's evening. All sorts and conditions of people went to hear him, and, I am sure, came away the better for having heard him. One could see the porters at the shops in the different streets hurrying to put up their shutters so that they might get away and lose nothing of his sermon. Surely this bears out all that I have said about the Ulsterman being extremely religious.

In those days, too, I made an across-the-table acquaintance with the Rev. Something Baxter, another unattached but fully licensed clergyman. He was, I believe, the last of the prophets. Strictly speaking, he was not a prophet at all, but he got

the name because of his definite and detailed assignment to current events of the predictions of older and much better known men than himself. But knowing how vague and ambiguous were the utterances of so many of the real prophets of the Old Testament, it must, I think, be allowed that the maker of the key that unlocks the golden shrine of their mysteries should be granted quasi-prophetical honours.

This quasi-prophet Baxter believed, I am convinced, that he was doing for Daniel what Fitz-Gerald did for Omar Khayyam. He seemed to be under the impression that Daniel would never have been heard of but for his exertions. He spoke and wrote as if he had been the confidential private secretary to the prophet, and that his mission was to supply the key to his writings, which he alone was capable of doing. He did not minimise the importance of his mission; for at the outset he assumed that every sensible person regarded the writings of Daniel to be what we would now call a jig-saw puzzle, and that the Reverend Something Baxter was the only living man who could put the pieces together so as to mean sense.

He had not nearly as great ingenuity as the venerable Mrs. Gallup or the cipher-seeking Donelly in inventing intentions for his principal;

but unless he made some move in this direction it is plain that one would be compelled to take the prophecies at their face-value, as we were accustomed to take the writings of Shakespeare until the Inquisition, with Ignatius at the head, made us aware of the aim of his author. Mr. Baxter let us into the secret of the sacred writer in many passages, and gave us to understand that he had had his prophetic eye directed to the second half of the nineteenth century to the exclusion of—as it appeared to us—very much more interesting periods; and before he had finished, after about an hour's discourse, I, for one, regretted exceedingly that the lions of King Darius had exercised so much self-restraint when they had a chance of a meal.

Mr. Baxter was able to tell us that when Daniel wrote about "a time, times, and an half," it was plain he could mean nothing else but the year 1869; and it was equally obvious that when St. John referred to the Beast he was thinking of Louis Napoleon, which was far from being complimentary to the Emperor of the French; but then everybody knows that the true prophet has been known by the freedom with which he says uncomplimentary things, from the days of him of Tishby down to the days of him of Ecclefechan. The "number" of this same Beast has been for ages the subject of

much speculation and a good deal of acrimony; and so much prejudice has been shown against the "six hundred, three score and six" that one can easily imagine a well-read man declining to allow such a number to be attached to him in any circumstances, even when it is qualified by the name "Gerrard" in brackets.

It is the most accommodating number to interpreters of prophecy; for I know that it has been in turn attached to a more recent Daniel whose surname was O'Connell, Benjamin Disraeli, Abraham Lincoln, and the editor of the *Saturday Review*. But Mr. Baxter was able to brush aside all ambiguity on this point, because the Greek equivalents to the name Napoleon, when added together or placed in a row or treated geometrically, worked out to exactly 666. His arguments enforcing his views were on a logical level with those dealt with by Voltaire in one of his wittiest passages concerning the Witch of Endor and the reappearance of Samuel: "What is it that you see—a man?" "Yes, a man." "Is he an old man?" "Yes, an old man." "Oh, then, beyond doubt, it is Samuel!"

Mr. Baxter's argument was: "You can so arrange the Greek letters that they work out to 666, and as that is the number of the Beast, beyond doubt Louis Napoleon is the Antichrist!"

I remember reading in a volume of similar interpretations that New York was the Babylon referred to in the Apocalypse, on the basis of the passage which says that within the city's compass were "slaves and souls of men." There were no slaves in Paris, the foolish interpreter affirmed, otherwise he would be strongly inclined to give the preference to the French capital, but New York was full of them. He wrote before the abolition of slavery; but now that slavery is abolished, and—if we are to believe some critics—New York will soon not contain even the second qualification of the text for the distinction of being the Babylon of the Revelation, a reader cannot but lose confidence in the logic of the interpreter.

As for Mr. Baxter, however, it appeared that he had an understudy, so to speak, for Napoleon and his 666, and when the Emperor fled from France in 1870 and died in England a few years later, it made no great difference to Mr. Baxter. He never apologised. He was as fluently dull as ever in his references to his new Beast.

It was really surprising how people could listen to so ridiculous a person. But I have had sufficient experience of the world to know that there is nothing strange under the sun. I should not be surprised to hear that there are thousands of people to-day

to whom the identification of Daniel's "Beast" is the supreme interest in life, just as there are tens of thousands engaged day and night in trying to interpret the mystery of the "Mr. W. H." of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

Every time I listened to Mr. Baxter as a boy I felt indignant that the splendid and vivid imagery of one of the greatest of the Hebrew poets should be vulgarised by such a shallow preacher. There is no more striking figure in the Sacred Book than Daniel the prophet, and I am certain that there was no mystery in his allegories to the people whom he addressed. They knew exactly what he meant; and to hear Mr. Baxter maundering on about him was like hearing a foolish person posing as the interpreter of a language which he does not understand.

In private life I found Mr. Baxter a prig. But this was because he ignored the existence of little boys, no matter how fair their hair was, in the houses where he was accommodated with the prophet's chamber and the equivalent to the prophet's barrel of meal and cruse of oil. I never met a man who had so completely mastered the art of ignoring little boys.

I need scarcely say that in at least one household he was alluded to behind his back as Beast Baxter. I believe also that some doggerel verses were

written on "Baxter and the Beast," their object being to prove that, after all, the Beast was Mr. Baxter himself.

I recollect that he laid the accent on the second syllable in pronouncing the Greek letter Omega. I thought still more poorly of him on this account, until, to my amazement, I found the same horrible mistake in a stanza that appeared in the third number of the *Cornhill Magazine*. I have it before me now. The poem is entitled "Dante":—

> "My sole thoughts turn with speechless love to thee!
> Thou wert my Alpha and Omega; First
> And Last! Let me return to liberty;
> I found it but in Paradise—with Thee."

And yet Thackeray must have read the poem before allowing it to disfigure an early number of the magazine which he meant to be read by gentlemen and scholars.

As to the identity of the Babylon seen in prophetic vision by St. John the Divine, there never has been much doubt in Protestant Ulster. The old Covenanters brought over the secret with them from Scotland and they have been announcing it ever since. The seven hills—that settles the topography. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, much more one that is set on seven.

The only time I ever heard a certain Dr. Cooke,

the most renowned of the Presbyterian clergy in Belfast of the last generation, preach, his sermon was on this subject, and there was no uncertain sound about it. Dr. Cooke was by far the most popular Protestant clergyman in the north of Ireland; and he was one of the staunchest opponents of Rome. He was a noble-looking old man when I was a boy, and he died before I was old enough to appreciate a sermon lasting longer than forty-five minutes. In his day he was, I believe, a fine preacher, though, of course, there were people who called him rabid. He greatly distinguished himself some time in the 'forties—or perhaps it was the 'thirties—by a controversy which he had with Daniel O'Connell on some thoroughly controversial subject—it may have been "Catholic Emancipation." And there was no true Presbyterian in Ulster that was not ready to affirm that he did not leave O'Connell a leg to stand on. But the pamphlet which was published by his authority and was supposed to embody the eloquence that had swept the most brilliant debater in the Kingdom off the platform, made me feel that if the Presbyterian champion was able to accomplish his purpose by such an effort as that which was attributed to him, the Irish Liberator must have been in a singularly yielding mood. Dr. Cooke got his statue within

eight years of his death. The town in 1876 was singularly deficient in sites for statues to its eminent citizens, and the only way that the admirers of Dr. Cooke could manage to get his memorial a place was by removing a statue that had occupied the most eligible position for twenty years: it represented a son of the Marquis of Donegall, whose courtesy title was Earl of Belfast. He had once been extremely popular in Ulster, but no one could be so unreasonable as to expect that his effigy would be allowed to block the way when Dr. Cooke was coming along. So the poor young earl was unostentatiously removed to obscurity, and a procession of Orangemen a mile and a half long marched to the laying of the foundation stone of the great champion of the Institution. For several years the statue of the Earl was lost; but I believe that it was discovered, after some inquiry had been made, and given house room in the entrance hall to some public building. But the indignity done to it has been amply revenged; for no one knows anything of the statue of Dr. Cooke; but if you ask for "The Black Man," you will not find anyone in the city who cannot direct you to it—unless, indeed, Belfast has found a more stalwart hero still to occupy the site of honour, *vice* "The Black Man," deposed.

The example set by Belfast in this transaction is one that might be recommended to the citizens of any town. Instead of erecting statues as permanent objects, why should they not be set up on a seven, fourteen, or twenty-one year basis? If it is found that the fame of the man lasts beyond the first term, by all means let the thing remain for another seven; but if not, let him be melted down, and the experiment tried with another citizen of whom the people are talking. Better still it might be—and it certainly would be cheaper—to have a permanent body cast in brass—it should be in brass—and let the head be easily movable, so that when the public think that one man has been long enough represented in the municipal robes, his head can be screwed off, and that of the next mayor put on his shoulders. It is only a matter of brass, and I fancy there are few municipalities in which the supply of this quality is lacking.

Belfast was for many years happily deficient in sites for statues; but recently the city has been deprived of its advantages in this respect, and the result—will be awaited with interest. Belfast is slow about placing anyone on a pedestal.

Among the other popular clergymen in Ulster during the years I spent in the province, a position far removed from all others must be assigned to

Dr. Alexander, the late Primate of Ireland, and Archbishop of Armagh. He was Bishop of Derry for many years, but he preached several times every year in Belfast and in churches in the neighbourhood. It would be difficult to imagine a more finished preacher than Alexander was thirty years ago; but, of course, he appealed most powerfully to a fastidious and cultured audience. He gave one the impression of the deepest sincerity, while every phrase seemed carefully thought out, and calculated to convey an exact shade of meaning. He had no pulpit affectations.

Dr. Chadwick, the present Bishop of Derry, was originally Vicar of Belfast. He was, perhaps, even a more eloquent preacher than Dr. Alexander forty years ago. He was more of an orator in the pulpit; and there was a certain eagerness in his delivery that was most effective. His great abilities should have been recognised much earlier than they were. If he had been in London, he would have got the advancement to which he was entitled.

Very different in style was the Reverend Dr. Hannay who, for many years, was incumbent of Christ Church and who, later, became Vicar of Belfast. He was a thoughtful preacher with a slow delivery, very pleasant to listen to, especially when he dealt with any of the leading topics of the hour. For

two years I went almost every Sunday to his church when very young, but I can remember quite clearly to-day something of his sermons. It is now quite as interesting to me to recollect the little, fair-haired boy who sat nestling close to his mother in the Rector's family pew. Who could have imagined that that handsome little fellow should become known wherever Irish humour is appreciated as "George Birmingham," whose delightful play, "General John Regan," has amused thousands of theatre-goers? I do not believe that his father was ever inside a theatre; as I have already suggested, few Ulster clergymen ever were, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian.

Another clergyman whose pulpit style was of the same order as Dr. Hannay's was the Rev. Dr. Welland, who was for many years the Rector of St. Thomas's, one of the nine new churches built within the twenty years under notice, and who afterwards became Bishop of Down. Careful in his choice of words, and quite unemotional in their delivery, he made his appeal to a somewhat circumscribed audience. He never touched upon a controversial point, and the general effect of his preaching was soothing rather than stirring. He was the friend of everyone in his parish—a man whose name was never mentioned in any direction without a word

of commendation. I understand that he made a most excellent Bishop. Bishop Boyd-Carpenter told me that before entering the University he had read classics with Dr. Welland for some time, and that they had kept in touch for many years. He spoke very highly of Dr. Welland's scholarship.

The Bishop of Down and Connor whom the Rector of St Thomas's succeeded was Dr. Knox, and his removal from Down took the form of a "translation" to the Primacy at Armagh. It was said that his original appointment was due to an error—a clerical error in both senses—of some official. I do not fancy that the report was founded upon fact. I believe that it had its origin in the attempt to account for the transaction on the most plausible basis. Dr. Knox certainly did not gain his mitre by reason of his brilliant preaching. He was a fussy, nervous man, who read his sermons in jerks. But I believe he was an excellent organiser; and at the General Synod he succeeded in preventing all his parsons from speaking at the same moment. I had an opportunity of witnessing his dexterity in this way. It seemed to me at first that he dealt with his parsons as a schoolmaster of the old type dealt with his boys, talking to them sharply here and there, and quite abusively at times; but I soon modified my judgment, for I saw how much

closer his treatment of them resembled the action of a nursery governess in an infant school.

And that is what was called "good organising."

And perhaps it was. At any rate, it shortened the proceedings; and my experience of public business since those days goes far to confirm the belief that anyone who shortens proceedings is a benefactor to business.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

It was feared that the disestablishment of the Church in 1870 would cripple every diocese in Ireland and bring about a deterioration in the *personnel* of the clergy. I do not think that any unprejudiced critic could say that either of these forebodings has been realised. On the contrary, I am convinced that the position of the Church of Ireland as a religious and social force has been stronger since it was thrown on its own resources than it ever was in the old days; and I have heard on the best authority that it still attracts to its pulpits as desirable men as were ever associated with it.

This should help to console those who regard with feelings of indignation and dismay the disestablishment and the disendowment of the Church in Wales.

But from the first day of the separation the reorganisation of the Irish Church was in the hands of the flower of the people of Ireland. The clergy and laity of this denomination represent a force in Ireland the character of which must be admitted by the rank and file of all parties, political as well as social, to be admirable; and the business men of the Northern Province contributed largely to the reorganisation of their Church so that it should lose nothing of its old power in the land. The result is that to-day, as I have already said, its finances are in a satisfactory condition, and its work is carried on with an energy that was not always associated with its operations in the South and West.

The story of the transforming of the Church—the word transforming is too strong, but the word reforming is scarcely strong enough—is one that has been dealt with under various guises by novelists and playwriters for years. It is the story of the well-born and somewhat pampered man who is suddenly deprived of his income and forced to work for a living, the result being that he develops resources of intelligence with which he had never previously been credited, and, by relying on his own exertions, becomes a great success. The clergy were compelled to work for their living. Previously they had only worked for their livings.

The Church of Ireland may now be described as

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the ideal of the intelligent Low Churchman. No scandals or even serious differences have arisen among its members in respect of candles or poses or those symbolic ceremonials which sometimes interfere with the harmonious working of the Church of England. If any clergyman of the Church of Ireland were to insist on being designated "Father" by his flock, as several of his brethren in England do, he would quickly find himself in difficulties. The choral services in the cathedrals are admirable, and, as a rule, the ordinary parish work, without being carried out on quite as intimate a scale as prevails in England, is very efficiently done.

In Ulster there is nothing like the strong dividing line between Church and Chapel that is noticeable in almost every small English town and village. In Ulster the "chapel" of England is the "meeting-house." It is taken for granted that when you talk of "going to chapel" you mean the Roman Catholic chapel, though the Roman Catholics usually talk of themselves as "going to church." Occasionally the church building of the Methodists is referred to as a chapel, but invariably qualified by the denomination. One constantly hears in the small towns of England people alluded to with a shrug as "chapel," as if they were "not just quite the thing, you know." Indeed, I have heard the style of a gown described as "chapel cut"; but this represented an extreme

of scorn that I am sure could be called for only by a case of exceptional enormity.

In Ulster I have never heard "meeting-house cut" applied to any garment; the qualification would be meaningless. "Protestant cut" would convey some slight suggestion of efficiency in style, but "meeting-house cut" nothing; for the simple reason that the Presbyterians and the Independents and the Unitarians and even the Baptists wear their church garments and what they call their "every-day clothes" without the intention of conveying anything of their religious convictions to a casual observer. Now and again, of course, one hears of an attempt being made by a man to suggest by an unusual glossiness of garb, that he is not quite as other men—that he is a little more strict in his religious observances—a little more careful of the company he keeps. Some such people are to be found in almost every town in Ireland, and they are not confined to one denomination. But I think that they are dying out, for Ulster offers a very unpromising area for such experiments. The "unco' guid" are too frequently regarded with suspicion. I was acquainted with the very shrewd manager of a bank in Derry, who told me that one Sunday morning he was sitting, as was his wont, at a window that gave him a view of the street, watching the

people going to their various places of worship. Among them was a certain Mr. Thompson, and this gentleman, he noticed, was very black indeed, and he carried rather ostentatiously a devotional book of unusually large size.

The shrewd Ulster business man was set thinking. Mr. Thompson was a local tradesman, and he kept his account at the bank, and the manager thought that no great harm would be done if he turned up Mr. Thompson's account in the ledger. He did so, and found that his balance was only just on the right side.

He said nothing to anyone on this matter, but awaited developments. He had not long to wait. A few days later Mr. Thompson sought an interview with him, and told him a story of a large sum being due to him by a dilatory creditor, and, in the meantime, requesting a considerable overdraft. The manager said that he feared that he could not see his way to advise his Board to allow him to overdraw. Mr. Thompson was righteously indignant, talking of his respectability and laying stress upon the position he occupied in connection with his church. The manager listened, but was inexorable.

Within a week Mr. Thompson had been made bankrupt for a large amount, and among his assets

were four unpaid-for suits of the broadest and glossiest black.

It was another gentleman of the same unctuous type who, on obtaining—not without a struggle and some awkward revelations—his discharge in bankruptcy, cast his eyes heavenward while remarking to a friend:

"Thank God, John, I owe no man anything."

But during the period of grace allowed by Mr. Gladstone's Disestablishment Act to the Church of Ireland, it was understood that the janitors would not be unnecessarily vigilant, so that any moderately qualified man might enter and enjoy the privileges allowed during that year. A good many clergy who would otherwise have been regarded as "stickit" were thus added to the Church, and a few came to Ulster. I remember one of the number who got an appointment as a curate of a church in a fashionable watering-place. He was what might be termed a "ranker." He had been sexton and bellringer in a church in the County Galway, and then had become Scripture-reader. A Scripture-reader is a sort of ecclesiastical non-commissioned officer; but on the passing of the Bill he got his commission and discharged the duties of a deacon before being put "on the strength" and given charge of a district.

The result was more amusing than edifying. In

the northern village by the sea the brogue of the West had never before been heard from the pulpit, and the simple folk, who themselves spoke so broad a Scotch that no word would be understood in Galway, felt almost scandalised to be asked to sit under a wild Irishman. His references to "our innimy the divil" were considered more jocular than affecting; nor was he more fortunate when he read out the prayer touching "our adversary the devil," for he laid the accent upon the second syllable and still left his "i" in the devil. He took his C.O.'s advice on the accentuation of the adversary in good part, and forthwith applied it to "out of all our adversities," emphasising the "ad" with open mouth, but making several ineffectual attempts to grapple with the three other syllables by treating them as insignificant. He was heard wandering about the churchyard night after night practising the modulation of the accents between "our adversary the divil," and "delivered out of all our adversities," but it was no use. He could not manage to get it right; and he affirmed in the hearing of someone that he believed the divil was in both sentences.

His masterpiece was, however, his description of the world (like General Wade's Highland road) before it was made. It was, he declared, with an eloquent sweep of the hands, one mass of "chowse

—black chowse." He had never heard the word "chaos" pronounced, and he admitted that he was unfortunate in his first attempt to overcome the difficulties that it presented to a Galway man.

Poor Mickey (his name was Michael, but people instinctively called him Mickey) improved his pronunciation after a year or two, but it seemed that he found it necessary to consume in the process a good deal more "Old Bushmills" than was good for him, and once or twice his pronunciation when reading the Lessons was thought to be defective on this account rather than by reason of his connection with Connaught. He made many attempts to reform, even going so far as to try the counteracting influence of poteen, probably on the analogy of the beneficial effect of his native air upon a sufferer. But it was all no use. I believe in the end he was shipped off somewhere—perhaps Jersey, where whisky is cheap—and in time he died.

Since the disestablishment of the Church of England in Ireland there has been a close *rapprochement* between the Protestant churches in Ulster, and since the menace of Home Rule began the union has been consolidated beyond the expectation of the most sanguine. There was practically only one opinion among them all in 1886, and the new generation that has almost grown up since then has

become, if it were possible, even more vigorous in its opposition to the proposed change of Government from Westminster to Dublin, with Maynooth within whispering distance. We hear of the prelates of the Irish Church attending services in Presbyterian meeting-houses, and Presbyterian ministers reading the Lessons in the cathedrals of Ulster. It is understood, as I have already stated, that all differences of doctrine between the various Protestant denominations are not worthy of consideration in the face of the menace to their common Protestantism. By some people in the Province I know that Home Rule is regarded as worthy of being looked on as a masked blessing, since it has produced such an effect, just as the Boer war was to be thanked for having proved that the principle of Imperialism was more than the theory of a few idealists.

But at no time that I remember in Ulster was there the least antagonism between the many Protestant creeds. Even when the British Association held their meeting in Belfast in 1874, and Professor Tyndall delivered his celebrated address as President, with its "infinite azure of the Past" peroration, there was no difference of opinion as to the "dangerous tendency" of such a deliverance. In almost every church in the town a sermon was preached tearing Tyndall to tatters and whirling the shreds

of his address to the winds. Before the end of the second week it was made perfectly clear that Tyndall "had done for himself": he had made the mistake of his life, and would leave Belfast a broken man. There were some people who, in spite of all that he had said and the appalling nature of his address, were sorry for the downfall of a man who had previously occupied quite a respectable position in the world of science ("so called," of course), and they hoped that his fate would serve as a useful lesson to other biologists who might be similarly so carried away by their own vague speculations as to formulate theories quite out of harmony with the first chapter of Genesis.

That was actually the course taken by the majority of the local pulpits in criticising an address which has done more to stimulate research and to indicate the lines on which biological investigation must be pursued than any similar deliverance. And Belfast did not really differ greatly in this respect from the other centres of nineteenth-century Orthodoxy in their reception of the President's address; nor did it differ so greatly as regards Tyndall from the tone of the pulpits which had some years before dealt with Darwin. There was no man living who would have been admitted to Holy Orders so long as he was not prepared to preach on the absurdity

of the "Darwinian theory." It was a renewal of the old conflict between the Oratory and the Laboratory, and it was carried on with the usual ancient acrimony for years. Darwin and Colenso were bracketed by the Orthodox as antichrists in partnership. That was in the 'sixties of the last century; but when Darwin died in 1881, the keepers of the keys, not of all the creeds, but of Westminster Abbey, offered to unlock their gates to receive the mortal remains of the man who had been regarded as the arch-enemy of the Truth as represented by the Church! Sure enough, he was "buried in Christian burial," and sermons of a very different character from those of twenty years earlier were preached on the "revelations of Darwinism" throughout the length and breadth of the land.

So it was in the case of Tyndall and Belfast. Belfast was a hotbed of Orthodoxy—I have already mentioned that even Unitarians were looked at askance by the more tolerant of the other creeds, but in horror by the majority, who were not tolerant—and lest the snake of Tyndallism had been merely scotched, not killed, by the pulpits, a locally noted professor of theology at once published a series of pamphlets which he designed to serve as faggots for the cineration of every trace of virus left by

the reptile. Although to many people who had never heard of Tyndall in their lives before he came to Belfast—I remember a man inquiring if he was not the son of someone who had made a translation of the Bible—the act of the Presbyterian professor was like flogging a dead horse, it was still regarded as a measure of precaution, we were living in such precarious times; and subsequently the pamphlets appeared in book form, and the volume occupied a place of honour on many shelves—especially of the Divinity students who would shortly present themselves for examination before the author. I came upon it quite recently, and I am bound to say in fairness to the author that I found it to be all that Gilbert said somebody's *Hamlet* was—funny without being in the least vulgar.

But however detestable the result of Darwin's years of laborious investigation may be to some people, the fundamental principles of Evolution remain unchanged from century to century; and Theology as well as Orthodoxy is subject to its inexorable operation. But there is scarcely anything so sensitive to its working as the science of criticism. Even the opinion of Belfast on Tyndallism became modified. The chief assailant of the Address had become as dead as his

book, and yet Tyndall lived on and Tyndallism had become incorporated in the Orthodox. A University Extension scheme had been started in Belfast, and in order to give it a good send off, the promoters made up their minds that they must have the most distinguished man of science available to deliver the inaugural address, and, with one accord, they decided that only Professor Tyndall would meet the requirements of the situation, and accordingly he was invited to the city that Belfast had become by that time, and he accepted the invitation. He came and delivered his second Belfast address, though perhaps not to so distinguished an audience as had listened to his first; and while in the city was the honoured guest of the Presbyterian President of the Queen's College, who had once sat at the feet of the Gamaliel who had written the excommunication of Tyndallism!

The Presbyterian pulpit of Belfast had followed the example of Westminster Abbey in recognising —well, what they recognised most closely was the trend of public opinion in certain directions. Westminster Abbey is not more Conservative than Belfast in regard to some matters, but in others both are equally alert, and they know that there is nothing in which alertness is more necessary than in watch-

ing to see in what direction the political, social, or religious cat intends to jump.

It was, I think, during the autumn of the year of the visit of the British Association to Belfast that the great heart of the United States of America was moved, on learning that an insidious attempt had been made to undermine the simple faith of a people to whom the States owed so much. Of course, it was understood that if Ulster had sent some of the best of her children to America, the debt had been quite paid off by the millions and millions of dollars that had accrued to the Ulster flax mills by reason of the Civil War closing the southern ports, so that instead of the cotton of South Carolina, all the world was wearing the flax of Ulster. That was not what was troubling America, though it had troubled her for a time; no, it was the dread possibility of science poisoning the Faith; so they sent to Ulster the antidote in the form of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, an evangelistic firm that had been doing good business in many quarters.

I believe that Mr. Dwight P. Moody was the Managing-Director; he did the preaching; Mr. Sankey was the Organiser, and he played the American organ. It may be assumed that one who plays an old-fashioned organ is simply an organist; but one who plays the American

organ is an organiser. They were both devout men, I believe, and they had both gifts. But it was understood that their American organs and their neatly-bound hymn-books were not to be regarded as such by all who wished to become possessed of them. Within a month after the opening of the mission, however, the urgent music of the American organ was heard in every direction, and the hymn-books were sold by the hundred thousand. Incidentally, Ulster was once again in the throes of a Revival. Mr. Dwight P. Moody was an excellent, straightforward preacher, of a style that was rightly supposed to make a powerful appeal to people who wanted to hear an American preacher. He did not trouble himself about doctrine or dogma; but he was as earnest as anyone could be in repeating to people what they had heard a thousand times before, and he had an immense store of picturesque American anecdotes to which he worked up his discourse, the way some hack writers of long ago worked up stories to suit a stock of illustrations; and when he got tired or saw that his hearers were getting tired, his "pard" began to pump music and to sing in a pleasing light baritone some cheerful hymn, or some rousing hymn, as the case might be; and before he had reached the third stanza everyone was ready to join in the chorus; and so

the torch was passed on from hand to hand until Mr. Dwight P. Moody had recovered himself sufficiently to renew his discourse or to make one of his "bright" prayers.

There can scarcely be any doubt that the services of the Salvation Army were founded upon those of Messrs. Moody and Sankey; and they certainly could not have had a better example of what the general public wanted. They wanted sincerity, they wanted to be interested, and they wanted to be made to feel that they wanted to be good. Messrs. Moody and Sankey gave them all they wanted, and, as a consequence, wherever their preaching and singing went on, attentive thousands were present. The theatre, the billiard-rooms, the public-houses, and the churches were alike deserted. Nobody seemed to want anything in the way of entertainment that Moody and Sankey could not supply; and we had well-written and tuneful hymns such as "Hold the Fort" and "The Ninety and Nine" sounding from cellar to garret, just as ten years before we had Richard Weaver's doggerel. The triumph of these evangelists would have satisfied the most ambitious; and when they made a return visit they were nearly as successful.

I do not think that the Church regarded the movement either with exhilaration or dismay. No

Christian organisation had a word to say against the services. The Presbyterians and the Methodists associated themselves with the movement, and, I think, sang the hymns in their churches. The result was a distinct improvement in the spiritual health of the town for perhaps six months; then came the usual relapse. The billiard-rooms filled once more, the public-houses were crowded to the doors, and the churches regained their normal congregations. This spasmodic, forced-draught, intensive-culture form of regeneration has its effect, but this effect is not lasting. Still, if only a score of people who were previously evil-livers, were induced to consider their position, and to amend their ways through the instrumentality of the preacher and the singer, some good was accomplished.

The curious composite temperament of the Ulster people has always been susceptible to the appeal of evangelists. While I remained in the province I had several other examples of the rapidity with which people of all classes yielded to the influences of men who were total strangers to them, and whose views had never been heard in a local pulpit. Even without the aid of an American organ, more than one missioner has been received with enthusiasm in Belfast —I was about to say with open arms, but only in respect to a solitary individual might this figure of

speech be taken literally; and this earnest visitor chanced to be an extremely good-looking young man, who was reported to have been at one time in the Navy. There was only the merest breath of scandal, and the incident would not have called for more than passing notice had it not been discovered that he had a wife already, but one who was living apart from him on account of his roaming tendencies on missions connected with the winning of hearts rather than souls.

It might be fancied that these descendants of the Lowland Scotch settlers would be as unemotional as their forefathers; but my experience among them informed me of the fact that on some points they are just as easily moved as the Irish of the South and West. There may be a little difficulty in discovering what these points are, and one meets with many surprises before they are discovered. But for that matter the same may be said of the Irish, who are generally supposed to be amazingly impressionable. A remarkable instance of what may be termed stolidity on the part of a Dublin audience took place more than thirty years ago, when Sir Henry Irving first produced Tennyson's tragedy, "The Cup," in that city. On the morning of the date announced for the production the newspapers were full of Mr. Gladstone's veritable *coup de théâtre* in causing

the arrest of Mr. Parnell and his associates and their lodgment in Kilmainham Prison. I have already alluded to the Prime Minister's exultant quotation from "The Princess" at the Mansion House banquet in London: "Our enemies have fallen—they have fallen!" The full text was in all the Dublin papers, and the city was absolutely seething with excitement. Now, what lines ever written were calculated to make a stronger appeal to the Irish people than those splendid ones assigned to Canna?—

> If a State submit
> At once, she may be blotted out at once
> And swallowed in the Conqueror's chronicle,
> Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
> The glory and grief of battle won or lost
> Soldiers a race together;—yea—though they fail,
> The names of those who fought and fell are like
> A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again,
> From century to century, and at last,
> They lead them on to victory—I hope so,
> Like phantoms of the gods."

These glowing lines were admirably delivered by Miss Ellen Terry before a house packed from pit to gallery—not a vacant place was in the theatre, and one could imagine the audience seething with excitement; and yet the speech was received without emotion—with scarcely a hand of applause!

Since the morning Irving had been looking for-

ward—not without some trepidation—to the effect of the impassioned lines upon the impassioned people. He had been consulting with the manager of the theatre and with several of his friends who knew Dublin well, as to the advisability of omitting Canna's speech, or, at any rate, some portion of it, and he was prepared to make an appeal to the audience to allow the play to proceed, so convinced was he that the roars of applause would be maintained until the situation might become embarrassing to the stage; and yet—scarcely a hand!

A few days later he told me of this extraordinary display of indifference—of unreceptiveness on the part of a people who have the reputation of being the readiest in all the world to take up a point in a play or in a song; but here was not a mere point—a mere ambiguous allusion—it was a sledge-hammer stroke, the force of which one might expect to sound and resound from floor to roof, and yet it might as well have been omitted for all the effect it had upon the hearers. Irving asked me if I could explain this amazing thing, and I acknowledged that I had no explanation ready.

The North is cold, but I would be prepared to guarantee that if Canna's speech were to be spoken from the stage of a Belfast theatre just now it would not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

I remember very well that in the year 1878, when the Emperor of Russia had been behaving very badly—from the standpoint of the Government of Great Britain—it was the intention of an important Musical Society in Belfast to produce Glinka's "Life for the Czar." Now, of course, everyone is well aware of the fact that this work is of purely romantic interest—that it is not intended to be a glorification of the Czar. By some means, however, the report became current that it was a sort of elaborated Russian National Anthem, and that, should it be performed in Belfast and news to this effect be circulated throughout Europe, the hands of Her Majesty's Government would be weakened in the negotiations that were forthcoming to prevent Russian aggression. Letters from the usual non-entities appeared in the local papers, protesting in the name of our common Conservatism against such an attempt as the performance would be, to suggest that Belfast was on the side of Russia in the dispute, and although some musical amateurs did their best to allay the apprehension, their labours were all to no purpose, and so strong was the public opinion against the word Czar, that the work, though rehearsed half a dozen times, had to be abandoned. Had it not been, I am convinced that it would have been hissed from the first note to the last. It was

abandoned, and Lord Beaconsfield and his Secretary, Mr. Montague Corry—a gentleman closely connected with Ulster—went to Berlin and brought back "Peace with Honour," to the tune that was ringing through the length and breadth of the land since it had been introduced by Mr. MacDermott, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do!"—something much more stirring than anything Glinka ever composed.

And yet there are people who are ready to assert that the Northerners are a stolid race!

They are no more stolid than the English, who, as a nation, have always preferred hysterical music to historical.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORANGEMEN

In my young days the Orange Institution was generally regarded in Ulster as an unmitigated nuisance—a perpetual menace to the peace and comfort of people who only wanted to be let alone. The Fenian troubles were making the South and West of Ireland unfit for respectable people to live in; but they did not oppress us in Ulster; Fenianism and flax do not thrive in the same soil. But the summer evenings in certain districts of Down and Antrim were made hideous with the thumping of big drums and the cackling of the ear-piercing fifes in the hands of the Orangemen, and that constituted a distinct nuisance.

Then in the month of July there were Orange celebrations in several parts of the Province, and these were regarded as the crescendo of nuisance; for the Orange anniversaries were not at that time

recognised as universal holidays, and the absence for some days of fifty or sixty men from their work in the shipbuilding yards was a serious thing to their employers. In those days the celebration of one of the anniversaries meant, if not quite an orgy of drinking, at any rate an intake of much more drink than was consistent with the peace and comfort of the neighbours. In Irish Police Court parlance, those Orangemen who were not drunk had "drink taken," the result being that those who had not heads broken had heads aching.

The Orange Institution was not taken very seriously by any of the population except the Orangemen, and they took it very seriously. Peace is the greatest enemy to patriotism, and Orangeism (in the opinion of Orangemen) is only another word for patriotism, so that it is not surprising that in those good years there was a disposition to treat the "loyal Order" pretty much as one treats a noisy child—a shake of the head—a compassionate shrug—a suggestion that the members knew no better, and that we must only put up with them.

But with the menace of Home Rule, which was regarded in Ulster as equivalent to Rome Rule as well as to Home Ruin, people awoke to the fact that the Orange Institution would bear to be accepted as a force instead of a farce, since it had its

feet resting on the very foundations of the Colony in Ulster—since the note that had come from every Orange fife at every celebration sounded the key to which Protestant Ulster was to be attuned, if it meant to hold its own against its enemies; and so for the past twenty-five years I fancy that the Orange Institution has been more highly respected than it was since the first glow of its inauguration was upon it.

There is no more mystery about its founding and its objects than there is about the Good Templars or the Rechabites. The genealogy of the last named resembles that made out at the Heralds' College for the ennobled sons of navvies, which begins with a Norman name and the date 1066, and then continues a long downward stroke through space to the year 1838, when the railway boom was on. The ancestor of the Rechabites flourished (palely) in Palestine 884 B.C., and none of his descendants was heard of until the middle of the nineteenth century A.D. So Orangeism began with the crossing of the Boyne by the Prince of Orange in 1688 and—*longo intervallo*—we find as its legitimate descendant the Orange Institution. I am afraid that I cannot give the exact date of its birth; but I believe that it took place toward the end of the eighteenth century, when the need of such a movement was made apparent in many parts of the province.

It was founded as an organisation to resist the pretensions of the Church of Rome and its seditious following to a place of power in the province. This was the original object of its creation, and it remains the *raison d'être* of its existence to-day. This being so, it is not surprising that its popularity should have increased amazingly since all the Protestants of the Province are actuated by the same motives, and thus are Orange in principle, if not in name.

Loyalty had ever been the watchword of the Orange Institution; but its exponents must always be ready to define Loyalty as a readiness to uphold and to obey such laws as they approve of. Properly speaking, what they are devoted to is Royalty, not Loyalty. Thus they consider themselves entitled to cry "God Save the King!" and at the same time to burn the Home Rule Bill the day it becomes law. This attitude takes some understanding; but though fifty years ago there were people who considered it altogether illogical, such people are not so numerous just now—in fact, the Ulster attitude seems the only logical one to be adopted by a race situated as the colonists have been since it was proposed to place them at the mercy of men who were condemned by a jury of judges as members of a criminal conspiracy and who, a few years ago when the darkest day that Great Britain had known for half a century

had come, greeted with delighted cheers the news of a great catastrophe to Great Britain's Army. The memory of that incident—by no means a solitary one of modern times—should be sufficient, I think, to turn an illogical situation into a reasonable one. But when, in addition to these recent memories, the Protestants of Ulster have countless ancient ones—memories of battle and siege and privation suffered in order that Ireland might be held fast to England and to the Crown of Great Britain, it seems to me that they have reason on their side when they claim to be accredited with Loyalty, even though they may refuse to obey a law which they believe would mean their undoing.

When Orangeism started after the battle of the Boyne, the Loyalists were the Royalists. The King of England was King by the Divine Right of the voice of the English people, and they fought on behalf of that King. The law was on their side; and, remembering this, the Orange Institution called themselves Loyal, and maintain that they are entitled to be accounted Loyal because they are devoted to those principles which inspired their forefathers at Derry and the Boyne, and these principles should command their devotion, they hold, in preference to every consideration.

That is, I believe, a fair enough formulation of

the views which the Orange Institution has held since its inception and which practically all Protestant Ulster holds to-day. I am not anxious to discuss the right or the wrong of these views; it is no part of my scheme to arrive at any conclusion on such a point; the utmost that I can do is to suggest that the attitude of the Royalists crying "God save the King!" and refusing to recognise a law which they say would prove fatal to themselves, is as reasonable and as praiseworthy as the attitude of the men who carried out the Great English Revolution, dethroning a King who had been disloyal to his people, and bringing in one whom they could trust to maintain their rights. To ridicule their claims to loyalty by pointing out that loyalty means respect of law, would be as unreasonable as to deny respect to those men who, because they were loyal to the English throne, turned out its occupant in the person of James and placed on it William by the side of Mary.

The Orange Institution includes members of several Protestant denominations, though the Church of Ireland is numerically the strongest of these. It is a great social as well as political force in the Province; for almost every town in four or five of the counties has its Orange Lodge, and the neatest building of a secular character is the Orange

Hall. What business is transacted at the ordinary meetings of an Orange Lodge I am unable to say; but I know that there is an open Bible, if not on the table, on one of the banners hanging on the walls, and in the place of honour is a portrait of the King, facing one of William III., so that I do not think that with such symbols of all that Englishmen hold most dear—the maintenance of a Protestant Throne and True Religion—there can be any nefarious transactions perpetrated. There certainly is no vast expenditure of money involved in the business, for, although a few members of a Lodge may be moderately wealthy men, the great majority are men in a humble way of life—farmers and their sons, tradesmen of all classes, clerks in the counting houses of mills, and the better class of workers in the mills. I am convinced that the discipline of the rank and file has for several years been excellent; but it must have taken a good deal of patience to bring about so desirable a state of things. To honour without question the decision come to on any debatable matter by the Master of a Lodge does not in an organisation of this kind come by nature to the free-born Ulsterman. The free-born Ulsterman, as I have rather more than hinted in a previous chapter, has a tendency to stand and "argue out" a point on which his judgment

differs from that of his superior—nominally his superior, I should say, for the humbler the status of the Ulsterman may be, the more unwilling he is to acknowledge any superior. But the authority of the head of an Orange Lodge, if sometimes not accepted as supreme without some grumbling, has for several years past, and especially in a crisis, been asserted with good effect. In his racy volume of Recollections published two years ago,[1] Lord Rossmore gives an instance of this. It occurred in the course of what was called "the Rosslea Incident." The Orangemen were at one side of a hedge and the Nationalists were at the other; but Lord Rossmore had warned the Masters of the various Lodges that if a blow were struck or any illegal action done by a member of the Order, the aggressor would be turned out of the Institution. The Nationalists held their demonstration and the Orangemen held theirs, and no drop of blood was shed. But Lord Rossmore was deprived of his Commission of the Peace by Earl Spencer, and I heard Earl Spencer hooted through the streets of Belfast in consequence.

I recollect very well the incident referred to in the book. It fell to my lot to have to examine in the most searching way several of the members of the Press who were watching the proceedings with

[1] "Things I can Tell," London: Eveleigh Nash, 1912.

notebooks in their hands, and their evidence bore out to the letter the account given years later of all that took place. The Orangemen showed themselves amenable to an order from one in authority. Of course, respecting the whole Rosslea incident, there are people who might ask what business the Orangemen had there; but such persons may not recollect that, only a short time before, Mr. Gladstone had taunted the men who had incurred the ill-will of the Land League, with a lack of spirit in taking their sufferings so meekly. I distinctly remember his words. He said that he should have thought that Irish gentlemen had more self-reliance than to submit tamely to the persecution of such an organisation as the Land League. That was at a time when every morning brought for our breakfast-table reading a list of murders, cattle-maiming, fire-raising, the mutilation of girls, the inhuman boycottings involving the death of children yet unborn, and the refusal of coffin-wood to unfortunate mothers —when every day that the Lord Lieutenant went for an airing he was escorted through the streets of Dublin by fifty dragoons with drawn swords and an *aide-de-camp* in full uniform on each side of his Excellency! This was two years before Mr. Gladstone found that the people of England would

not give him a majority in the House of Commons, and Earl Spencer, in consequence, found that implicit confidence might be placed in the people of Ireland!

In the years of peace, as I have already said, the Orange Institution was looked at askance by a good many of the Protestants of the North; by others it was regarded with impatience; and by more than a few with contempt. It was said that the organisation was becoming as convivial as the Freemasons, and as fond of late hours—that their marchings and drumming and demonstrating were a direct menace to the Roman Catholics, and no one wanted anything so ardently as to live in peace with the Catholics. Besides, the Orange "Arches" that were to be seen every Twelfth of July were not really arches, but merely festoons, and tawdry at that, especially after a shower of rain. Thus, on all grounds—moral, pacific, and æsthetic—the Institution was looked on with disfavour generally.

But when the cloud of Home Rule spread over the North, and there was some talk of defending Ulster to the last ditch, there was a great awakening to the possibility of the Orangemen having a chance of justifying their attitude, and the public "changed their tune" in referring to them. It was another case of—

"It's Tommy this and Tommy that and, Tommy, how's your soul?
But it's thin red line of 'eroes when the drums begin to roll."

When there was no menace of ruin, the menace of Orangeism was condemned; but when other drums than those of the Orangemen began to roll, the Loyal Order, without being quite advanced into the ranks of the heroic, was taken into favour; if it came to lining the ditches, the Orangemen could with confidence be left to discharge that duty.

Meantime, however, the Orangemen had "changed their tune," but only literally, not metaphorically; they had not given up their "Boyne Water," or their "Protestant Boys," or their genial "Croppies, Lie Down," but they had changed their musical scheme of making them acceptable to the generality of listeners, and instead of the proportion of one fife—and that a small one—to every six drums—and every one of them large—they raised full bands in almost every district, and began to supplement their limited *répertoire* by stirring marches, and pleasant excerpts from the comic operas, and this was certainly a move in the right direction. It was now possible to watch the march past of five thousand Orangemen and their womenfolk without

suffering for it afterwards. I would suggest that when the King's troops are sent to force Ulster to accept Home Rule, and when the Orangemen meet them in battle array, all the latter need do is to play the National Anthem and continue playing it; for the regulations command that whensoever the National Anthem is played in public, every soldier on duty, with sword fixed, shall stand at the "present," or if unarmed and not on duty, at "attention," so that in obeying orders, the King's troops will be unable to fire a shot or make a move. That is one of the solutions of the problem that some people are foolish enough to fancy must shortly be faced.

In Belfast several attempts have been made in the past by political associations to ignore the existence of the Orange vote as a power to be reckoned with; but in every case the result proved that in at least three of the Divisions the Orangemen formed the paramount power. It was at the General Election of 1868 that the first Orange demonstration of this sort was made. I think that the ordinary Conservative candidates at this time were Mr. John Mulholland, who afterwards became Lord Dunleath; and Sir Charles Lanyon, the father of Sir Owen Lanyon, the *protégé* of Lord Wolseley, and the first Administrator of the British Colony of the Transvaal in

1877. The other candidates were Mr. Thomas McClure, a local merchant and a Liberal in politics; and Mr. William Johnston, whose name I have already mentioned. The result was the triumph of the Orange martyr-hero, and the rejection of both the authorised Conservative candidates.

After the passing of the Reform Bill of 1884, the Conservative Associations ignored the Orange candidates upon, I think, three occasions, and got beaten every time. It was the Orange Institution that secured the return of a plausible scoundrel who called himself de Cobain, a pretentious and sententious rascal who, from being a clerk in the Municipal establishment, had been able to retire with a small fortune made by illicit means while in the employment of the Corporation. This was hardly a triumph for the Orangemen any more than it was for the Conservative Association; for Sir J. P. Corry, who failed to be returned, was a man of business ability, if not otherwise highly gifted; and the *soi-disant* de Cobain, after being expelled from the House of Commons, was prosecuted and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment with hard labour. He was one of the mistakes of the Orangemen. But they did not like to be dictated to by the Conservative Association, and, considering the *personnel* of the Organisation in those days,

one could scarcely blame them for their attitude of independence. Once again they had an opportunity of showing what they could do against organised ignorance in the same form, when, as I have said in a previous chapter, they put in their candidate against a barrister with local connections.

The Orange Institution is certainly a social, political, and I think I may add without offence, bellicose force to be taken very serious account of by anyone approaching Ulster in a friendly or unfriendly way. It is by its constitution defensive in its aims, but its powers of offensiveness are enormous. It has until lately been accused of taking an exaggerated view of the dangers that menaced Ulster and Protestantism, and thus of magnifying the importance of its mission to keep before the eyes of the Province and the world generally, the necessity for being always prepared to resist the aggressions of a possible enemy; but I am inclined to believe that even those people who, some years ago, detested the very name of Orangeism—those people who are to-day in the ranks of the Liberal Unionists—will now be ready to confess that the apprehensions which the Orangemen inherited from the experience of their ancestors, were not quite baseless.

I must confess that for the greater part of the

time I lived in Ulster, I was as much prejudiced against Orangeism as were most persons with whom I was acquainted. I had great hopes from an attitude of general toleration, for a cure of most of Ireland's social ills, and I had a feeling that the Orangemen were intolerant. I detested their incessant drumming, and I thought that their mixing of colours in their sashes and banners absolutely atrocious. (It is from such immaterialities that some people come to conclusions on large questions.) But, in addition, I had noticed a certain element known as "bumptiousness" on the part of several members of the Order with whom I had come in contact—a certain presumption that all the world would recognise the importance of a person who had risen from the humblest rank to the proud position of Deputy-Master of an Orange Lodge in an Ulster village. But now I think that I can estimate such mental and temperamental weakness at their proper value, and to look at the Ulster Orangeman with his resolute face and aggressive drum-sticks and feel that he is an important factor in the solution of every question that concerns the future of Ulster. I cannot say that I like him, but he is the last man in the world with whom I should like to be at loggerheads on any matter in which my future might be bound up. In another book, I have told the true

tale of the Orangeman in a roomful of people who cried,

"Look ye here. I don't know anything about King Willyum and I don't care a curse; but I'm the best mawn in this room." This is a good enough Orangeman for me.

The man who, clumsy as a buffalo, and as wary, has a buffalo's instinct for an approaching danger and prepares for it while it is still at a distance, is the man whose side I should like to be on when the crash comes.

But the buffalo has been wiped out of creation, somebody will tell me.

True; but the Ulster Orangeman hasn't.

CHAPTER XIV

IRELAND AND ULSTER

IT is an amazing experience for a traveller to come direct to Ulster from a week's moving about from village to town in the South or West of Ireland. He may not like the change of landscape or the change of people. I have been to almost every town in every part of the island, and I have passed through scores of villages in regions rather difficult of access; once upon a time, too, I explored the river Shannon, three years after I had explored the Orange River—it does not flow through Ulster, but through Africa—so that I think I may claim to know something of my native land and its inhabitants. The Shannon trip was the most illuminating; for I took a small boat to Enniskillen and carried it on a vehicle some fifteen or sixteen miles to the very source of the river. But I had to do for the Shannon what Speke did for the Nile: I had to find out its source for myself. No one at the little

village of Blacklion had any knowledge of the fact that the narrow stream that divided two fields a mile from any habitation, was actually the Shannon that people associate with Limerick and the South. And once the boat was afloat—without room for the oars to ply, but with some willing hands on the tow-rope—I sailed and paddled through lake after lake until I reached the same Limerick in the South and cried out, following the example of Dr. Johnson, when he came to "Lichfield" in the Dictionary, "*Salve, magna parens!*" only my parent was *parva.* But the three weeks spent on the greatest waterway in the Kingdom enabled me to learn more of the true Ireland than months spent in the tracks of many travellers would have done.

And the true Ireland I found to be very different from the Ireland of the Agitator and from the Ireland of the Orangeman. In my young days we heard a good deal about people who described themselves as "gentlemen farmers." Some of the class with whom I was brought in contact I should not have so described, though they might have been farmers; but here I found myself moving slowly along the borders of many counties among a race of gentlemen peasants. Somebody called the Irish peasantry the finest in the world. He must, I think, have been a previous explorer of the Shannon.

THE WHITE ROCKS, PORTRUSH.

Gentlemen they were in every respect, and every day revealed them as such, and revealed their children to be the children of gentlefolk. A man would be digging in a field a quarter of a mile away, and when my little boat appeared, he would drop his spade and hurry down to the water's edge to inquire if he could do anything for me and my companion. When we had got our stove ready with its frying pan in the morning, a stranger would come up with some freshly-caught fish for our breakfast; they were ours if we chose to have them, but they were not for sale—not a shilling could we force upon anybody. Arriving about midnight at a village of a dozen houses clustered about one of the splendid locks—a vessel of two hundred tons could have been accommodated between the gates—a man left his bed and took charge of our boat while we went to a little town with an inn, until the morning; and when we were starting next day after breakfast, we found that he had washed and tidied up the boat in readiness for us; but the half-crown we offered him was refused in a way that made me feel that I had been trying to tip a Spanish grandee for showing me the Velasquez or the Goya in his castle dining-room. Another day we had made fast to the bank and had gone a mile away to sketch the exquisitely-carved porch to Clonfert Abbey Church. We had not

taken the trouble to put away our possessions in the locker; and in the meantime it had begun to rain. When we got back to our boat we found that someone had been there before us. The garments that we had left loose on the thwarts were neatly folded, and put away, and the tins of stores had been arranged under the tiny half deck in the bows; our tea cups that we had left in a hurry had been washed and restored to their locker, and over the cushions aft one of our waterproof coats had been spread.

That is the lame end of the incident. We waited for an hour, hoping that we should have the chance of at least thanking the friendly person who had done us such service; but we waited in vain. I have not seen him from that day to this.

And now I recall that it was on this very afternoon we had asked our way to Clonfert of a group of lads who were swinging on a gate; and forthwith one of them jumped down saying, "I'll take you there, gentlemen," and he took us there—a good half mile; but he would not take our sixpence: he shook his head and, turning about, ran away lest we might tempt him beyond the breaking strain of his courtesy as a gentleman.

Scores of incidents such as this remain in my memory in connection with this little excursion. When I returned to the North and told a typical

Ulsterman of the refusal of the people to take money in payment for their courtesy, he looked grim.

"I never heard of such fools!" he said, shaking his head mournfully. "It's no wonder that the Irish don't get on," he added, after a thoughtful pause. "Heaven help us! that sort of thing makes a body feel that they are hopeless—hopeless. You're sure it wasn't that they were huffed because you didn't offer them enough? I've heard of them being quare and proud," he suggested, after another pause. He was clearly making an honest attempt to work out the puzzle on a legitimate basis—one in harmony with his experience—in harmony with the traditions of the Northern Province.

"I must confess that I didn't think of that," said I.

"Ah, there y'are," he cried triumphantly. "You shouldn't jump at conclusions: the people mayn't be as big fools as you try to make out."

I told him that I would bear his suggestion in mind, for I should be sorry to do the people an injustice.

A few years afterwards I had a boat on the Lagan, and I will say that I never had anything stolen from her—for the best of reasons. But one evening I came upon half a dozen boys practising for some

riots that were due about that season, by shying stones at her where she was moored across the river. Another day I found one of the strakes smashed by a stone and the water over the thwarts.

Again, I had a boat on the Bann, and when rowing under the bridge at Portadown I had my rudder-yoke carried away by a stone of six or seven pounds' weight dropped from above. If it had fallen ten seconds sooner it would have broken my skull as if it had been an eggshell; five seconds sooner it would have gone through the timbers of the boat and sunk her.

Some years after my Shannon trip I went to the West, and found the people revelling in the consequences of a famine that had moved the Government of the day to vote some £30,000—I think this was the sum, but I am not positive—to pull the distressed district through the worst. I found myself at that time in the Ireland of the agitators. As one man put it, "If it hadn't been for the famine, we'd all be starving this day."

When I visited the district the people were certainly not in the last stages of emaciation. There was a decent man in the County Mayo from whom I was in the habit of getting chickens by post. Sometimes they were sorry specimens, but this year they were like Surrey specimens.

"How is it that they're so fat this season?" I inquired.

"Sure, it's the famine that did it entirely," he replied.

And when I looked about me I understood just what he meant.

At the instigation of some inquisitive Ulster Member of Parliament, there was an inquiry into the question of the disposal of the relief, and the result was embodied in a Blue Book published, I think, in 1892 or 1893. It was possibly the most laughable official document ever issued. It was proved that everybody living within the sphere of influence of the Board had applied for relief. Men drove up in dogcarts and on jaunting-cars—mounted on horses with more than a drop of "blood" in them—horses which the riders looked to get £80 or £100 for at Ballinasloe—farmers with a dozen cows in their byres, tradesmen with decent bank balances, and egg-merchants by the dozen, to say nothing of chicken-fatteners—all demanded a share in the plunder, and got it, too, with a liberal hand. From one district alone, the Blue Book stated, more people applied for relief—and got it—than there were inhabitants in that district; but no questions were asked, and for once there was a happy and contented peasantry and happy and contented

publicans. I cannot, of course, recollect all the particulars of this illuminating document, but I had my own evidence as to the disposal of the "relief" meal; and it was quite enough to convince me that, with an occasional famine, the most unpromising districts of Connaught would become famous for fatted fowls.

The agitators told the people, the men of Ulster said, that this sort of thing would be habitual when they got Home Rule, and the people needed no further persuasion to believe that Home Rule was the thing for them. Greatly though the men of Ulster were disposed to doubt most of the statements of the agitators, they believed that their prediction in this respect was strictly accurate: Home Rule would be just like that all over the country, with Ulster supplying the money; for the Ulsterman laughs at the idea of the Nationalists being willing to exempt Ulster. To exempt Ulster from their scheme of Home Rule would be like taking over a dairy farm and exempting the milch kine.

In those days the famine was the most profitable of all industries in the Province of Connaught. I remember that every two or three years there came to us in the North piteous appeals on account of the usual famine. I recollect saying to a Nationalist pressman:

"By the way, how is that famine of yours doing?"

"Famine?" said he. "There's no famine now. Next year is to be the famine year."

I asked his pardon for being premature, but I promised him to say nothing that might interfere with the arrangements of his friends; only I thought that they should publish their famine intentions on the principle of the compilers of the Nautical Almanac, three years in advance.

Does it strike anyone as being strange that since a Government whose existence has ever been dependent on the passing of a Home Rule Bill, there has not been the faintest rumour of a famine in any part of Ireland, although during the previous quarter of a century a famine, as I have just said, was due every three or four years?

There may be people who would consider this circumstance as distinctly remarkable, but I am not one of them. Without going so far as to describe myself as an ardent advocate of Home Rule, I must confess that I see in it a strong argument in favour of Home Rule. When even the very prospect of such a change can produce so desirable a state of things, causing healthy and abundant crops to arise instead of meagre and miserable ones, what might not happen if the prospect were to materialise? If

the bog can be made to blossom as the rose beneath the benediction of Mr. Redmond at Westminster, what might not reasonably be expected when he had come to College Green, Dublin? The Angel of Nationalism is hovering over the land; you can almost hear the beating of its wings over fallow fields of plenteousness—very different from the tracts referred to by John Bright in the sublime image which I have parodied, but in no spirit of levity.

But if I were to submit this logical and reasonable argument to the attention of the bigoted Ulster people, I know that they would ask me if I believed in the efficacy of the pills that were once sold freely in England to prevent earthquakes.

There, I admit, I should find myself in a difficulty, in spite of the fact that an excellent patent medicine was offered to me some time ago, and its value emphasised by the statement that when San Francisco was destroyed by an earthquake some years back, the building where the medicine was made was the only one left intact within a large area.

Every time that I returned to Ulster from my excursions into Ireland I was struck by the extraordinary difference in their way of life between Ireland and Ulster. It is the difference between a field of lilies and a factory of looms. In three of

the provinces they toil not, neither do they spin. But in Ulster they do both. You find in Munster, town after town, some of them picturesquely ruinous, others holding their own, but nobody else's, under the shelter of corrugated iron roofs. In Ulster you find town after town full of toilers and barrack-like mills. There are rows and rows of workers' houses, every one with its five or six rooms and its kitchen range, all commonplace sanitary dwellings, and everyone disbursing from £2 to £4 a week. You will find plenty of ugliness, but no leisure on the part of the inhabitants to notice it; if they did notice it, they would not know it for ugliness. But go to one of these towns on Sunday and see the way the people dress going to church, and you will know what is meant by prosperity. There are some idealists who will tell you that prosperity in a town is a hideous thing. They look at the workmen and their wives and sons and daughters in their "Sunday best," as the painter looks at the Italian bambino with his face washed and his curls combed out. Let such people roam through the villages of the South. There they will not be offended by the destructive effects of the comb, and the smell of soap will not assail their nostrils. But it has always seemed to me that a good deal might be said in favour of prosperity. I have watched the workers in one of

the thriving towns of Ulster going to their place of worship in all the bravery of their Sunday garments, and I have walked between the rows of their ugly houses while the streets reeked of cooking joints. I have, a little later, watched the head of the house in his white shirt sleeves, smoking his pipe in his own doorway, and falling asleep in the act; for his young people had gone for their Sunday walk by the river or down the burn, or in their park, and I must say that I felt that prosperity was justified of her children.

For six months at a time I have been at Blarney—one of the few industrial towns of Munster—and I found that the conditions of life there did not differ from those prevailing in the North; only the young men went playing their hurley on Sunday, or had a run with their harriers; they also had a band of their own, and played all the disloyal tunes very much out of tune. A short time afterwards I was sojourning in the neighbourhood of a little town in the County Limerick, where there was no manufacture going on, and the air of depression that clung about the old walls was so unendurable that I felt myself longing to see people in their Sunday best and to smell the stimulating odours coming from a hundred ovens where was being cooked the burnt offering of the high priestess to "himself" and her

family, only it had better not be burnt more than just enough, or "it wouldn't be telling her," for "himself" knows what a well-cooked dinner is—he should, for he gets one every day. The odour of those joints and pies in the ovens of the ranges is the odour of prosperity, and it is stimulating.

These towns of prosperous thousands are to be counted by the score in the colonised parts of Ulster —Dunmurry—only a few miles from Belfast—Lisburn, with the largest linen thread factories in the world—Lurgan, Portadown, Gilford, Dungannon, and many other smaller towns to the south and south-west of Belfast. In the other directions industrial prosperity is carried on in an unbroken chain northward through County Antrim to Londonderry, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Antrim town, Banbridge, Coleraine, Portrush, Letterkenny, Strabane —all "live" towns. Then elsewhere we come upon Newtownards, Downpatrick, Moy, Newtown-Mount-Kennedy, Omagh. These are all associated with the linen industry, with bleach greens every here and there. And, of course, the thousands of people employed must be fed, and they take good care that they shall be well fed; consequently every field is cultivated, and on a highly scientific basis, and every farm is well stocked. I do not think that there are better fed or better housed communi-

ties in the world than these industrial people of Ulster.

The little ports of Antrim and Down and the coast towns and villages are also contributors to and sharers in the general prosperity. There is not one of them that I do not know intimately, and there is not one that is not as picturesque as any of the coast villages of Cornwall, Devon, or Dorset. It is unnecessary to mention Larne or Portrush; all the world crosses to Ireland from Stranraer and goes to see the wonder of the Giant's Causeway, and those visitors who have a day to spare go on to Derry and stand on those carefully tended walls that withstood the shock of the cannons of the Irish Army for one hundred and five days, during the most memorable siege in the history of Great Britain. But Lough Foyle is not nearly so beautiful a landlocked bay as many others further south. The lovely wooded windings of Lough Strangford, with its many green islands and brown strands, will never be forgotten by anyone who has sailed through its placid waters—by no means placid at the entrance when the tide is running at six knots. In her home at Old Court lived for many years Lady de Ros, the daughter of the Duchess of Richmond who gave the famous Waterloo Ball at Brussels, at which, as a girl, Lady de Ros had danced; and not far away;

THE HERRING FISHERY, ARDGLASS, CO. DOWN.

at Killyleagh Castle, the girlhood was spent of the present Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava. Along the coast of Down are the little towns of Bangor, with its little bay, the yachtsman's paradise: I think I know all the soundings from the Pickie Rock to Blackhead on the Antrim coast of Belfast Lough; Donaghadee, also with its little bay, whence the cattle grazing on the hills of Galloway can be seen on a bright day; Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, Ardglass, Dundrum, and Newcastle, the last-named a place of marvellous charm, under the shadow of the Mourne Mountains, in a gorge of which nestles Bryansford, the seat of the Earl of Roden, one of the most picturesquely-placed houses in the kingdom. But for the soft sylvan beauty in which our eighteenth-century ancestors delighted, Rostrevor, overlooking Carlingford Lough, could hardly be surpassed. With the last glow of the setting sun upon the surface of its waters, Lough Carlingford becomes an Italian lake, and the wooded slopes above it make one feel that one is back at Bellaggio.

These are but a few of the breathing places of the working Province, and though they have only the casual industries of such towns, they partake of the general prosperity of their more opulent neighbours. Ardglass and Dundrum are of themselves, however, centres of a considerable coast trade. The

former has a herring fleet of its own equal to any on the South Coast of England, and the night's catch is brought by an early train to Belfast in time for the breakfast of hundreds of families and for the midday meal of thousands of workers in the mills and factories of that great city.

In my young days there were cottage industries in almost every town and village along the coast as well as in inland places. I remember that at Bangor in County Down there was a long row of cottages, in the front room of which there was rigged up to the rafters the simple apparatus of two looms for hand weaving. When I was ten years of age I made the acquaintance of one of these weavers, and I used to watch him daily at his work. Our intimacy was so great that he allowed me more than once to wield the handle that threw the sliding shuttle from side to side, while he worked the cumbersome treadles, to which my feet did not nearly reach. In one corner of the same apartment, which I begin to think must have been somewhat congested, the mother of the family sat spinning the flax with a soft, purring sound. There was a curious and rather overpowering odour of damp flax that pervaded every room in the cottage. It was scarcely the kind of perfume that one would associate with Bendemeer's Stream; but it was certainly a refined

version of that which greeted us in the old days when taking a stroll on a summer evening by the waters of Bangor where the newly-pulled flax was under the process of rotting. The whole air was polluted for miles around, and at one time there was a likelihood of every fish being poisoned in the rivers of flax-growing Ulster.

But there was a much more interesting cottage industry in these places when I was a boy. It was of that form of linen embroidery, locally known as "sprigging" or "cut work." The process was practically the same as that of the great embroideries of Italy and Spain in the seventeenth century, only that the material demanded a more rigid treatment than was possible with the old silks and velvets. The latter were fastened to a frame with stretchers, but the Ulster linen work was stretched by being laid over one hoop of perhaps six or seven inches in diameter, while a second hoop, a shade larger, was pressed down outside the band of the first; thus the area of linen exposed became as tight as the skin of a drum. The design was outlined upon the fabric and worked in fine, hard stitches, and when completed, the point of a scissors was inserted, and the blank space within the outline was deftly cut away. It was beautiful and artistic work, but it had one fault in the eyes of the retailers—namely, its

durability. It was almost impossible to—wear it out. This may have been the cause of the decay of the industry, though I am rather inclined to believe that the conventionality of the designs had a good deal to do with it. I have bought quantities of the Swiss embroidered lawn at Lucerne and Lausanne, and also of the Madeira work at Funchal and Las Palmas; but I do not think that I saw any at the islands that surpassed some that I remember in County Down.

On the doorstep of almost every small house in Bangor, Donaghadee, and the other towns, the girls used to sit in the long summer evenings, bending over their little hoops and stitching away as fast as a machine could go. Some of them earned enough money to make the industry a profitable one to themselves, but, of course, there was a middle man, and equally as a matter of course, he had the lion's share of the profit. It may be that the public taste rejected the "cut work" in favour of the embroideries after nature, and not merely in outline; and perhaps I may be too hasty in assuming that the industry is dead; but I know that I made some inquiry on the subject before I left Ireland, and I was told by one of the largest of the drapers who had dealt in it that it was not on the market. More recent inquiry, however, has made me aware of the

fact that the industry is still kept alive in some directions, and excellent work is still done, though it is not favoured by the shopkeepers.

There have been several "movements" organised by ladies to establish schools for lace-making and for crochet under the more attractive name of "crochet lace"; but unless arrangements are made to have it retailed at a fair price—that is, a price that will give the profit to the skilled workers rather than to the plausible shopkeeper, no cottage industry movement will have a chance of success even though it may be under the patronage of the wife of a Lord Lieutenant.

CHAPTER XV

THE MANCHESTER OF ULSTER

ENORMOUS as is the difference between the small towns and villages of the southern and western Provinces of Ireland and those of Ulster, the difference between Dublin and Belfast is greater still. In Dublin the people give one the idea that they are busy playing; in Belfast that they are busy working. In Dublin you need never fear that you will not be welcome if you drop in upon a business man to have a chat in the middle of the day, about nothing in particular; in Belfast you would be told very plainly that the motto of the house is business first and pleasure—never. There is always a topic of the day in Belfast; but it has nothing to do with literature or art in any shape or form; it is usually a purely local topic, and it is understood that the only time when it can be discussed is when going to business in the morning or returning from business in the evening. Long ago, before the days of

TOWN HALL, BELFAST.

barley-water—or rather in the days when barley-water was served with a froth on it and called Guinness—there was an interval of gossip at midday between a good many business men; this was usually passed in one of the bars situated in the rear of a cake-shop with two entrances—for the good book-keeping business men in those days did their drinking by double entry. It would have been thought scandalous if one had walked straight into a public bar from the public street; but if one entered by the cake-shop door, it was assumed that all the business men in Belfast were anxious to buy buns, and if one went casually down the entry leading to the back door, it was assumed that the business men were all hurrying to have their hair cut. In Dublin the air is full of topics, and there is always plenty of time to spare for discussing them. There are college topics, and cathedral topics, and theatre topics, and Royal Hibernian Academy topics, and Four Courts topics; but within the circles where these are being discussed the topic of Home Rule rarely enters; when it does, it is only by way of a joke. I dare-say that to-day at many a dinner in Dublin, Ulster's attitude is the *pièce de resistance*, and I am sure that it is treated as a joke, and that innumerable clever things are said about it.

In Dublin, as in Paris, incidents graduate as

topics in proportion as they are susceptible of humorous treatment. So it was in the coffee-houses of the eighteenth century, and the people of Dublin seem to belong to the eighteenth century, even down to those living in slums under sanitary conditions that would shock even Hogarth's crowds. And while thousands of the people are being poisoned in tenement houses, their betters are seeing the point of the joke which is to be found in the incident of the worst of these dens being owned by members of the Corporation.

In Belfast I have no doubt that the business men talked over the report of the Commission that made the hideous revelations, while walking or travelling by tram or rail to their offices, but I feel sure that they talked about it without being conscious of the fun underlying it. What they would see underlying the report is the poisonous snake of Home Rule Government.

One man in the train would read aloud from the morning paper a few of the paragraphs in the finding of the Commission :—

"There are 20,108 families occupying one-roomed dwellings, 4,402 occupying two rooms, 821 occupying three rooms, and 491 occupying four rooms. It will thus be seen that 78 per cent. of the lettings are one-room lettings. Many tenement houses with seven or eight rooms house a family in

each room, and contain a population of between forty and fifty souls. One house visited by the Committee was found to be occupied by ninety-eight persons, a second by seventy-four, and a third by seventy-three.

"As a result of their inspection of a large number of these houses in all parts of the city, the Committee state that it is no uncommon thing to find halls and landings, yards and closets, in a filthy condition.

"It was stated in evidence before us, by several witnesses, some of whom were clergymen whose duties bring them into close touch with tenement houses, and who are, therefore, well qualified to speak, that the constantly open doors and the want of lighting in the hall, passages, and landings at night are responsible for much immorality.

"It is pointed out that the death-rate for 1911, the latest year for which complete returns are available, was higher than in any of the large centres of population in England, Wales, or Scotland, and the Committee fear that until the housing problem is adequately dealt with, no substantial reduction is to be hoped for.

"We think it desirable in connection with this subject, to refer to some matters which came under our notice relative to tenement and other property owned by members of the Corporation, and also to touch upon the exercise by the Corporation of the powers given to them under their own Act of 1890, with regard to the granting of a rebate in taxes on premises whose valuation does not exceed £8. The amount of rebate allowed is 25 per cent., and the total amount of rate remitted last year was £3,819, a matter of some importance to the ratepayers.

"The principal owners of tenement houses sitting as members of the Corporation are Alderman G. O'Reilly, Alderman Corrigan, and Councillor Crozier, who are returned in the evidence as either owning or being interested in nine, nineteen, and eighteen tenement houses respectively, and in four, thirteen, and one small houses; while ten other members of the Corporation own or are interested in one to three tenement houses, and Alderman O'Connor owns or is interested in two tenement houses and six small houses.

"We regret to have to report that some of the property owned by the three first-named gentlemen, and from which they are deriving rents, is classed as third-class property by the sanitary staff, or, in other words, that it is unfit for human habitation. A feature which makes this all the more discreditable is that actually on some of this class of property both Alderman O'Reilly and Alderman Corrigan are receiving rebates of taxes under the Corporation Act. Councillor Crozier is also receiving rebate on property which, though not classed as being unfit for human habitation, is not, however, in our opinion, in such a condition of repair as to warrant a rebate being given, and does not comply with the express conditions required by the Corporation. In two instances affecting twelve dwellings belonging to Alderman Corrigan, the property was certified by the sanitary sub-officer as not fit for a rebate, but was subsequently passed as fit on the authority of Sir Charles Cameron (the city medical officer)."

Those are the bits which would be read out in the train or the tramcar by the Belfast men on their way to business or returning to their homes; and,

conscious of the Belfast death-rate decreasing from 21.3 in 1890 to 18.1 in 1912, and of a daily collection of dust-bins, they would shake their heads, and look as solemn as if the Corporation stock had fallen by three-sixteenths of a point. It would take a surgical operation to lead them within a measurable distance of appreciating the point at which the Dublin men in the same station of life would laugh, and then they would become more serious than ever by the additional weight of the thought that such ill-timed levity could exist.

But the report would live in their memories—another argument against Government by Irish Catholics, and a Lord Mayor with a salary of something like £2,000 with some precious perquisites.

Perhaps then someone in the train, with a good memory, would say:

"I wonder if they still have at the Dublin Mansion House the black flag which they hoisted to the flag-pole when King Edward visited Dublin as Prince of Wales, and when other Royalties were there? If they have it still, I think that they would do well to hoist it to-day."

"They should hoist the black flag at the Mansion House, but not before they have done the hangings that should be done," another would probably remark.

Personally, I should prefer living among people who take disagreeable revelations less heavily; but I should prefer having my property where people do not.

If I were to express such a desire in Dublin, I should be clapped on the back. And if I were to point out that the difference between the death-rates of the two cities meant that I should live three years longer in Belfast, the Dublin man would say:

"That would be an awful prospect!"

If there is one thing that a Belfast man is prouder of than his Protestantism, it is his Belfast. But to say this is something like saying that he is prouder of his offspring than of his wife. Belfast is his child; Protestantism is his spouse.

"Ma mère, c'est la République," cried one of Victor Hugo's heroes.

The Belfast man cries:

"My child; that is Belfast!"

It is to-day, he will tell you, what he and Protestantism have made it.

What it is to-day is due to its having inherited the good qualities of both its parents.

And, like the fond father, he thinks that all the world is envying his possession of so incomparable a child.

He has nursed it and fed it and washed it from

its infancy, and it has repaid him for his care of it, for it is now a strong and healthy child; and, in the ecstasy of a father's pride, with a note of the croon of the monthly nurse, he cries:

"No fears! the horrid big bogie man will never get it! Never, never! No fears!"

And really, from what I know of him and of the bogie man, I don't think that the bogie man will get it.

Belfast is really a wonder. It has been growing within the past seventy years as few towns in the world have been, but it has not outgrown its strength. It has been well looked after, morally as well as physically, and the result is that to-day it can do what few other cities can do. It can launch the largest ships that the world has ever seen; it can spend nearly a quarter of a million making a dock that will enable the biggest ships in the world to be repaired; it has the largest rope works in existence, and the largest spinning mill. For the production of such luxuries as whisky and tobacco in marketable form Belfast stands pre-eminent in the Customs list. For a variety of industries, and for every one of them all being a world's record in production, there is no city in the kingdom that can compete with Belfast. One spinning mill alone employs over eight thousand hands, and the great

foundries quite as many. And then for special articles of world-wide fame, having no connection with the staple trade, one finds such intensely interesting works as the Sirocco on the County Down side of the river Lagan. Here have been manufactured for the past thirty-five years the Sirocco tea-drying machines which have revolutionised the tea trade and brought the Indian leaf into the market. The inventor of this, and perhaps of another hundred equally valuable contrivances, is Mr. S. C. Davidson, the most brilliant and certainly the most fertile brain in the North of Ireland. On the other side of the river are the works of Messrs. McCaw, Stevenson and Orr, the inventors of transparent printing, of Seccotine, and other articles in daily use all the world over. But no matter in what direction one goes in Belfast, one is brought face to face with stupendous statistics.

"Is it possible that we are in Ireland?" a distinguished stranger exclaimed, when I had shown him some of the wonders of this city.

And that is just what everyone is ready to ask on arriving in Belfast from Dublin. Of course, the only answer is:

"No; we are in Ulster now."

An American, with an open mind on the Home Rule question, came to me in London after being in

A Linen Street, Belfast.

Belfast, and gave me his opinion that no one except a knave or a fool could visit Nationalist Ireland and then come into Loyalist Belfast without being convinced that those principles which went to the making of such a place as Belfast were the best for the future of Ireland. His impression was that the value of a movement is known by the *personnel* of its advocates.

He had been to the House of Commons, and had seen the representatives of Nationalist Ireland.

"I took the trouble to find out all about them," he said.

I interrupted him. He could not possibly have heard *all* about them.

"I heard enough," he affirmed. "I wouldn't lend a nickel to the best of them. Which of the bunch has any stake in the country?"

"One of them was a butcher's assistant in a county town," I reminded him.

"What has that got to do with it? Oh, well, I suppose he may have a steak as well as a chop, if you insist on it. But the whole bunch—what have they done for their Ireland? Where are the big industries that they control? Where are the thousands and tens of thousands of families that are dependent upon the intelligence of these men for their daily bread and a dry roof over them? The

leading spirit among them had a pothouse in a Belfast slum—I was shown the place—the centre of the riot area. He should write his life. 'From Pothouse to Parliament'—that would be the title. 'From Pothouse to Premier'—he will be the first Premier of Ireland, a nation, I suppose. Who in the name of heaven, would take the opinion of these representatives of rags and idleness against the opinion of the men who have made Belfast one of the greatest cities in your British Islands, and almost equal to a small one on our side, as to what was best for the country? What, would you make the crofters of the Hebrides or Western Islands of Scotland an Arbitration Board on the question of the widening of Piccadilly? I tell you what it is: your British politics must be in a bad way if they are to be controlled by such a bunch as those Nationalists who could never earn a salary in any civilised country. The notion of that gang controlling the Government of Belfast? Are you all mad here, or what?"

I assured him that we were not. Only the House of Commons by decreeing, practically without debate, that every member was to be paid £400 a year, had solved one of the greatest problems in the life of such Irishmen as could never earn the half of that sum in their native land.

"You may take my word for it, that taunt would not apply to them when they got their Home Rule and got at Belfast. Salaries! I heard they pay their Lord Mayor of Dublin a couple of thousand a year! Salaries! Oh, yes, sirree. Who was the foreign general that looked at London and said it made his mouth water to think of the possibilities of loot that were there? It strikes me that there must be a good many Nationalist mouths watering at the very thought of Belfast."

Of course there was no arguing with such a man as this; so I did not make the attempt.

I found that he had given more attention to the political than to the picturesque situation in Belfast. But respecting the latter, much might be said. I am pretty sure that there is not in the Kingdom a city at once a great seaport and a great manufacturing centre, so favourably placed as regards natural scenery. The approach to it by sea on a summer morning is very lovely. The Lough is sufficiently narrow to allow of many interesting details of the heights on each side being seen in the sunlight. There are miles of dark cliffs on both coasts at the entrance, and an occasional stretch of beach, and, above all are irregular slopes of green, well wooded in places, and dotted with villas in the centre of their gardens. The little town of Bangor, which I

recollect as a fishing village, has now spread itself all along the low cliffs to the west of its bay. Just beyond this point is another village of beautiful houses at the water's edge, called Helen's Bay. The late Marquis of Dufferin, in whose manor the shoreway was included, hoped to see arise at this place a little town that would be a memorial to the mother whom he loved so well—Helen, daughter of Tom Sheridan and grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. In the inland distance one catches a glimpse of "the woods of Clanaboye," mentioned in Scott's "Rokeby"; only an absurd French "de" was substituted for the Celtic "na," and the title is now "Clandeboye." The barony was Dufferin and Clandeboye. The Heralds' Office clerks were constantly making mistakes.

On the same coast one passes the districts of Craigavad, Craig Owen, Cultra and Marino—all tracts of villas and gardens—until Holywood is reached, and one sees a charming little town backed by timbered hills. This is where the channel of the estuary of the Lagan narrows, passing scores of villas at Strandtown on the one side and Greencastle on the other. Here the majestic scene of the Cave Hill asserts itself beyond the artificial banks where the shipbuilding yards of Messrs. Workman and Clark and Harland and Wolff make themselves very

audible. The Cave Hill dominates Belfast pretty much as Table Mountain dominates Cape Town. Often, from where I stayed at Mowbray, six miles from Cape Town, I have looked up at the Devil's Peak and fancied I saw a resemblance between a part of its outline and the western slope of Cave Hill.

The northern coast of the Lough is not so rugged as the opposite shore of which I have given a few details. The most conspicuous object of the former is Carrickfergus Castle, a stronghold of supreme importance in the stirring years of the seventeenth century, though its name constantly appears in the history of the previous three hundred years. One of the districts nearer Belfast is called Trooper's Lane, to commemorate the march of Schomberg's forces to take part in that "King-making Victory," the Battle of the Boyne.

The City of Belfast has now become like the City of London in regard to its inhabitants. Few of them live within the mile and a half radius from the Post Office in Royal Avenue. Why should they, when villas by the row await them in every direction? The suburbs of Belfast are sufficiently various to suit all tastes. Such people as like the bold scenery of the northern mountain range can go to the Antrim Road or the Crumlin Road; those

who prefer more pastoral slopes can live along the base of the Castlereagh Hills; and lovers of the woodland will have plenty of choice on the Malone Road or the Stranmillis Road, the latter affording a beautiful view of the River Lagan. In a southern direction the road to Lisburn is now almost covered with villas and gardens of the prosperous business men of this marvellous city.

But more important than this tale of "eligible building sites" is the knowledge of the fact that the housing of the tens of thousands of workers is such as few manufacturing centres can equal. Within easy reach of their daily work are streets and streets of workmen's cottages; and as most of them are modern buildings, they possess all the conveniences detailed in the agents' lists. Wealth is not essential to comfort in Belfast. I have good reason to know that one can live more cheaply in a Belfast suburb than in almost any part of England or Ireland. Moreover, so admirable is the administration of municipal affairs and so vigilant are the inspectors of the various departments, that food adulteration, the curse of so many industrial towns, is practically unknown. It should also be mentioned that the valuation for rateable purposes is extremely moderate, and that the rates are reasonably low.

Belfast has not only fewer paupers per 10,000 of

the population than any other town in Ireland, but its statistics of pauperism are by far the best in the whole of the United Kingdom. Belfast has only 95 paupers per 10,000 inhabitants, London has 233, and the average for the United Kingdom is 207. The average poor rate in Ulster is 10½*d.* in the £, in Connaught it is 1*s.* 4*d.*, Leinster 1*s.* 6½*d.*, and Munster 1*s.* 11½*d.* There are fewer illiterates in Belfast than in any town in Ireland, and in Ulster there are only half the number of police per 10,000 of the population that are employed in Kilkenny, which is the lowest of the Counties outside Ulster. In Galway there are four constabulary per 10,000 of the population to each constable in County Down.

These statistics require no comment; nor do those which illustrate Belfast's growth in population and prosperity:

		1912.
Population (1891)	255,950	391,051
Valuation (1893)	£741,000	£1,543,919
Funds of three banks with head offices in Belfast (1892)	£14,797,285	£25,107,600
Tonnage clearing from Belfast (1893)	2,002,629	2,841,553

There is still another set of figures which Englishmen will regard as important. The amount collected in Belfast by Customs and Inland Revenue in 1892 was £3,250,000. In 1911 it was £4,915,377,

or more than double the amount for the rest of Ireland. The figures are only exceeded in the United Kingdom by London, Liverpool, and Bristol.

In such a community of business men, it is only to be expected that the Gas Works, the Electricity Works, and the Tramway system should be owned by the Corporation, all contributing to the reduction of the rates. Public parks are to be found in every direction; they cover an aggregate area of nearly 300 acres. Then there are swimming baths, wash-houses, a fine Technical Institute, a central Free Public Library and three branches, all these departments being controlled from central offices within a building that is possibly the noblest Municipal Hall in the Kingdom.

This is the Capital of Ulster as it exists at present. It rests with the people of Great Britain to say what it will be in the future.

THE END

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